A CITY OF THE DAWN

R. KEABLE

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'Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.'

THE ROAD TO THE CATHEDRAL

A CITY OF THE DAWN

BY ROBERT KEABLE

AUTHOR OF 'THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST'
'DARKNESS OR LIGHT,' 'SONGS OF THE NARROW WAY,' ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ARTHUR C. BENSON

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TO MY MOTHER

INTRODUCTION

I

It is something more than a pleasure to me to be asked to say a few words of introduction to this brilliant little book, the work of a friend and former pupil. 'Brilliant' is the word that keeps recurring to me, because the author appears to me to have actually *seen* things wonderful and strange, to have caught and retained, out of a thousand rich impressions, whatever it is which constitutes their interest and charm, their strangeness and grotesqueness, their appeal and pathos, their strength and fineness; and all this, it seems to me, ripples into words both apt and beautiful, till I too see and feel it, swiftly and distinctly—the heat, the colour, the scent, the atmosphere of it all. The book is vivid, picturesque, impressive from end to end.

II

I have often asked myself why it is that a description of Christian mission work is gener-

ally so dull, and if it *needs* to be dull. There is no doubt that such a record too frequently has a dreary solemnity about it which is frankly disconcerting. I wonder now whether the reason is not simply this, that the good men who bring back stories of their work, and try with a pathetic earnestness to enlist the interest of the unconcerned, have not really *seen* the marvellous quality of what they have lived and toiled among. Perhaps they have been too much preoccupied, too much bent on the organisation and detail of their work, too much absorbed in reproducing a settled scheme of action in the far-off place to attend to what was actually going on about them in heaven and earth. The result is a sense that one need hardly go out into the wilderness to see proceeding, under added difficulties and disadvantages, what is going on more completely and perfectly at home—the school, the hospital, the meeting, the church service! But here in this book the writer's eyes are everywhere; and not only that, but the words flow out to recapture it all, till as I draw to the end of chapter after chapter, it is with the dreamlike sense that some vision has passed between me and the quiet bookshelves of the room where I sit

and the close-grown shrubberies of the College Garden.

III

There really is no reason why such a life should be dull—it has every element of travel, of risk, of adventure that can make life exciting. Bishop Westcott once said, 'A man should be prepared to die for his profession, as in the case of the doctor or the soldier. A shopkeeper must not object if his profession is regarded with less respect, if he cannot die for it.' That is an obvious truth; and the life of the missionary has that first touch of honour and chivalry. Of course, all who go out to such countries run the same risk for different reasons, the soldier, the sailor, the official, the trader. But there is added to the life of the missionary a deeper interest still. Soldiers, sailors, and officials go out to keep order as unobtrusively as they can, but still they are there as conquerors. The traveller goes to pick up impressions, the trader to make money—their object is to bring something away. But the missionary goes to understand the heart and mind of the native, to love him if he can, to win his love and trust,

and to persuade him of a great truth, a far-reaching idea. He goes to give everything and to gain nothing, and thus the missionary can have a better chance of getting behind the tapestry of life, so to speak. And yet perhaps the dulness sometimes lies in this, that he is not looking out for the difference of the new scene from the old, but for its similarity to the old. He thinks perhaps that visions which seem so glorious to himself must approve themselves to all who own the privilege of humanity; and thus he can only record what he went out to say. But the relief here is to find that the writer does not so face the new conditions. 'They do not think as we think,' he says; and why the book strikes so hopeful a note is that he is all alive to the differences—the history, the traditions, the instincts,—which have combined to make these other folk what they are, and which cannot be exchanged for the new ideas by the simple process of changing clothes!

But the adventure of it need be no more dull than *The Odyssey* or *The Pilgrim's Progress*; and Mr. Keable took with him a zest, a freshness, a lively inquisitiveness, and an eye sensitive to every kind of impression; so that

instead of coming back with a tale half-patient, half-dolorous, of schemes more or less realised, of converts partially conformed to Western ways, of British institutions more or less securely established, he gives us a sense of movement and richness, bare and tragic enough in one glimpse, hopeful and resplendent the next moment, and all full of tropical luxuriance and glowing intricacy.

And that is why I believe the book may have a singular value, because it makes an appeal to the imagination, and brings out vividly the romance of mission life, which many most earnest workers hardly care, hardly dare to emphasise.

IV

He touches, too, upon deep problems which cannot be soon or easily solved. If we compare our modern missions with the first outburst of primitive Christianity, we feel at once the immense difference. Then, a few simple, uneducated, unworldly men, of the labouring class, went out to fight the ideas and forces of a vast and infinitely powerful civilisation, as though a band of Russian peasants might bring a new religion to London. Now, it is

the other way ; and the missionary comes with the wealth, the law, and the prestige of civilisation behind him ; the flag waves over him, and the maxim-gun is not far off. It must be fearfully and inextricably bewildering for unsophisticated and ignorant natives to disentangle the motives of it all, and to believe in the meekness, the affection, the disinterestedness of the missionary, who comes as a mere concomitant of so much secular power and military force. Such condescension, they must think, surely has something sinister about it !

Civilisation brings formidable and disastrous gifts with it—disease and unscrupulous persons and enforced orderliness and dangerous indulgences ; and even Christian ideas and instincts—are they come to transform or to destroy ? Does the Englishman, so strong, so consistent, so self-satisfied, really wish to persuade ? Is there not a menace of some kind behind his innocent overtures ?

V

It all points to the necessity of a deeply scientific and psychological treatment of these problems, a real knowledge of savage inherit-

ances and instincts, a delicate conciliatoriness, and a determination, not simply to expel or ridicule deeply rooted ideas, but to show that the new principles are a true and natural development of the frail and fitful hopes that exist. Missions are not merely the fad of enthusiasts; in spite of natural failure and delay, they are of the very essence of the Gospel spirit. The message of the Cross is to show how the worst that man can do is vitally linked with the best that God can do!

And here, I make no doubt, lies the deeper and stronger appeal of the book, that though the essence of the Faith of Christ is here grasped with overpowering emotion, it is yet not viewed as a cast-iron system, with every detail implacably fixed, which *must* recommend itself at once to minds whose very texture is utterly and entirely unlike our own, and the strands of which pass dimly and obscurely back into an immemorial antiquity. Mr. Keable, though he holds his creed and his tradition with ardent and unconquerable enthusiasm, yet keeps ever in sight the belief that the principle and the life must carry and evoke the system, and that the system must be shown to have grown unmistakably out of

the principle. It is a strong and wide faith, not dully nor hardly pressed; and the two aspects of the book here unite—namely, the intense absorption by eye and ear and mind of all the infinite variety of atmosphere and history and scene, never neglected and yet never allowed either to bewilder and distract; and on the other hand, the deep conviction that the Incarnation holds in it the end and the solution of all these broken lights and complex threads; and is not the mere triumphant answer of the West to the East, but the one eternal satisfaction, for Eastern and Western perplexities alike, of the deepest of all human needs,—the need to be set right and justified and given the chance of joining the faint and broken hope of the present to the full glory of the world to come.

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON.

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NOTE.—Some of the above chapters have appeared in *The Commonwealth*, *The Treasury*, and *The Churchman*, to the editors of which I desire to make acknowledgment.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

I

THE SIREN

One's first impression of this part of Africa is that she is a great siren. Less than a quarter of a mile away, across a stretch of still, blue, translucent water, the sea is rippling on a white, coral-sand beach, and, beyond, the trees come down to meet the shore in a tangle of verdure, pricked out, here and there, with masses of colour. We round a headland, and Kilindini lies before us. On the shore the cocoa-nut palms give way to a grove of baobab trees, which stretch out naked, silvery branches unbendingly against the azure sky, and robe their enormous trunks and lower boughs with hanging festoons of some coarse creeper. We slip by, and clutch a buoy, to swing round in the grip of the current. Then comes the landing experience, of which it takes some time to tire; and presently we dismiss our half-naked boatman, with his rough-timbered boat, alongside the landing-stage of squared coral blocks. Right

ahead is the Uganda railway with its insignificant permanent way, all ludicrously unprotected and raw, yet, nevertheless, the artery of a continent and the life of a protectorate. But we board a ' ghari ' and are pushed up the sandy road at a double. Dark, long-leaved mangoes show like Western trees in the distance ; lighter bananas lift wide graceful fans on either side ; cool, impenetrable almond trees make a grateful shade ; and scarlet acacias, their blaze of blossom crowning bare branches, lend a colour to it all. The rich scent of frangipanni is in the air, and here and there a bougainvillea runs riot in a blaze of purple upon some decaying trunk. And these are the skirts of the siren.

To penetrate, you leave the road and take the path that follows round the island from Kilindini to Mombasa. Hard by the sea, at the head of the baobab grove, stands a sentinel to keep the way. No one knows how old the grey-stone, pointed round-tower is that marks, with its twenty odd feet of pierced pencil, the grave of some Arab chief, but it stands at the entrance of a ruined city. Now and again a wrecked bastion shows above the mass of verdure, and a tumbled wall marks some public building. Where the shade of a strong tree

has thinned the bush beneath it, lie the stones of a house where once men loved and hated, a house caved in and broken as by the blow of a giant fist. Africa has covered the most of them with her green mantle, but you stumble through a labyrinth of remains. And all the way along it is the same.

The outline of the part that they have played in the story of the ways of men is plain enough. True, the veil of seven centuries of history is the most that you can lift with any certainty, but even that is a grim business. For seven centuries ago this little island was inhabited by native races, of whom the memory only has survived, but who loom with a certain dignity in that dim light. They were tall strong men, for whom there might have been a future if the thread of their fate had been woven otherwise in the shuttle ; maybe another Tyre or Carthage lay in embryo here. But Africa is a sorrowful mother, and she breeds children who slay each other. Anyway, in the dawn of that day came Arab dhows, not so different, I imagine, from those our gunboats still watch in the Persian Gulf; and 'The Island of Wars,' as the natives name Mombasa, saw another bloody page turned in her chronicles. It was part eddy of

a tide that had swept to Tours and Delhi, yet it did not wash these Africans away without an effort. Those bastions tell their own tale. But the naked warriors, who were too proud to bend, broke at last before the storm. Maybe the coral strand, yonder, is in some way their tomb, and the Swahilis of to-day have drops of blood which once ran in those forgotten veins. Figure that deadly strife if you will, of days in which this same sunlight broke on bodies straining in the fight for home and hearth, of nights in which this same moonlight made possible the bitter agony of night alarm and raid. It was over, you say, when the Portuguese sailed into the bay; was it? It is never over in Africa.

A little farther than our baobab grove, a bank of orchids marks where recently they cleared the ground for a golf course and discovered the most significant remains of that new invasion. Hacked out by rough native tools in the living rock is an old flight of steep steps that leads down to a cave and a sheltered inlet. You plunge into the darkness until the water laps deep at your feet in a green light, but ahead the passage pierces upward to an old fort that crowns the headland a few hundred yards

away. It was part, it is guessed, of a yet longer gallery that led to Fort Jesus, half a mile farther round the coast at the head of the gulf that makes Mombasa harbour, and you may imagine the secret gang that carried munitions and victuals into that old beleaguered castle. For it was more often beleaguered than not. Yes, the Portuguese landed—between the devil and the deep sea. It was they who ruined the Arab city yonder, ay, and crucified its inhabitants in the sun for sport. Grim sport for all! Grim for the men who dared, with a bravery the wonder of our modern enterprise, a venture such as this; who landed, with the tropic sun above them, in suits of mail and with arms almost ludicrous in their clumsiness; who dared malaria with no notion of its cause and less of its remedy; and whose nearest reinforcements were no nearer than two years—if God were kind. They carved out their foothold with blood and tears, and they knew no other way to keep it. Ever and again they were swept into the sea; and those reinforcements, for which dead eyes had strained in vain for help, had to land upon the blood-stained beach, and build anew walls which had fallen to the cries of their tortured countrymen

who had built them first. And there could be no return. . . .

The story might be pieced together at length by the aid of documents in Europe and a vivid imagination, but it were better left untold. The end of all was but the last link in a chain of like occurrences. Vasco da Gama had built Fort Jesus, whose shell, beyond the destruction of even Arab vengeance, remains to-day; and for years its grim strength had given the colonists a rare security. Then, somewhere behind the mainland hills, the hordes of Islam mustered, and this part of Portuguese East Africa was reduced to the area of that old fort. Thirteen hundred men, women, and children, it is said, were shut up there, and they held out for fifteen months, thanks, perhaps, to that dim passage and the little sheltered cove. No one knows the progress of the siege, but one pictures it. . . . When the headland bastion went, with its chapel still to be made out among the weeds, the very sight of the open homeward sea was gone, and despair must have settled upon them. The rains, if they filled their cisterns, doubled the victims of malaria, and the sun, when it followed, sent them panting to the walls in the hot moist damp we fear to-day.

Maybe they killed their own women before the end; they were white, so I hope so. Be that as it may, the garrison numbered but eleven before they were too weak to load the guns again, and then the red flag of the Sultan floated where it floats to-day—for Mombasa still pays a nominal suzerainty to Zanzibar. But where the armed Sudanese warder, guarding what is now the jail of our administration, shows ever and again in his beat against the waving palms across the creek, those eleven paid dearly for their venture. A man may take long a-dying, and the art was well learned then.

I saw the old fort first by night, when an African moon shone white on the reef a mile at sea and threw spectral shadows on battlement and moat. There is no stillness like the stillness of an African night, for, by a curious trick of which I have no explanation, every sound seems detached from the night itself and serves to emphasise its stillness. Across the water, in some village, the tom-toms were sounding, and from that almost unexplored territory the low boom of them broke on our ears. Thick bush and forest to the marge of the sea is pierced by those African tracks which make a road for *safaris* from east to

west across the continent, but still that bush covers ruins, actually Egyptian, Persian, and Chinese among them. No man can tell the story of those comings; but the siren's skirts may be lifted to show the bones that mark their end.

Well, we have railways and hospitals and Maxim guns to-day, and the few often poverty-stricken Arabs who are still ignorant enough in their impotence to hate us, are here on sufferance now. Their slaves of yesterday supply the jail, and their women walk the streets by night. It is a theme for the moralist, and a problem for the politician; the old riddle is asked in a new way, that is all; but one thing has not changed. As you retrace the way to Kilindini, you pass the railings and white gateway of the English Cemetery, and you may push in. There are only two classes here—men and women of middle age, and children. Scarce a stone is fifty years old, yet many a grave hides dust whose friends have forgotten to clear the weeds above him. Life is short in East Africa, and man's memory likewise. Only the siren never forgets and never changes; she spreads her lure with gold as yesterday; and she covers with the beauty of her garment the victims of her pitilessness.

II

WITHIN THE GATE

THE sluicing of the deck beneath the seat which a tropical night had bidden me exchange for my berth, awoke me early on the day of our coming. The wide, still sea was as yet but silver-grey in the dawning, and Mombasa lay eight hours' steam behind; but the mail steamer was slipping by a long, low, slightly hilly island, upon which could be easily distinguished the big green leaves of banana plants, the wavy tops of cocoa-nut palms, and the dark close-set foliage of mangoes beyond a sandy coral shore. Ahead, where the land bends out to sea, lies a white patch which soon resolves itself into a huddle of houses, low for the most part against the rapidly deepening blue of the harbour, but broken by the spire of the English Cathedral, the twin towers of its Catholic brother, the tall roof of the Sultan's Palace, and the flag-staff of the English Residency. The boat passes among a scattered

handful of rich green islets. And just beyond a grim reminder of the last bombardment in the shape of a broken masthead that pricks up out of the water, between H.M.S. *Pandora* and a British India mail steamer, our anchor runs out as cheerily as it did in the halcyon days before there was steam.

One is used by now to the medley of boats which immediately swarm about the ship as if by magic, for one has had them at Mombasa, Aden, and Port Sudan already; but the streets of an Arab city are less familiar. A first impression is that they are very narrow, very devious, very long, and very smelly. The unending white of it all is broken, here at least, by the green of some tropical tree at every turn, especially where an ancient fig rambles up the white crenellated bastion of the old Portuguese fort, or a tangle of gorgeous creeper leans over a high-enclosed Arab house. But the infinite variety of the native is most bewildering. A Swahili woman in the latest fashion of blue; an Arab whose dress differs scarcely at all from that of the first *Ibrahim*; a Hindi woman in a long brick-red veil, yellow or green breast-cloth, and much silver at feet and ankles; a genuine African in a black skin

THE OLD PORTUGUESE FORT

and a loin-cloth; these are but a few of the types in the street. And presently you dive between a couple of shops, pass a sign-board in English and Arabic, and some one says that this is Mkunazini. It was the slave-market, and it is now a kind of square, planted between the houses with trumpet-shaped hibiscus, rich-scented frangipanni, and great red acacia trees. The Cathedral is on the left; and right in front are two parallel rows of buildings, connected by an overhead verandah, which house the priests in charge. The big red-roofed ladies' mission house is beyond, rising above a thatched white-walled printing establishment. The Hospital, looking above all things cool and clean, is to the right; and far ahead, across the glint of water in a creek, rise the tiers of brown, thatched hut-roofs and tall green cocoa palms which make up the native town. It is very hot and beautiful. Natives pass, each bewildering because of that impenetrable something with which the new-comer is as yet unfamiliar, and the hum of an Arab city just penetrates the enclosure. One slips gratefully into the Cathedral, which is admirably proportioned in general effect and rather like a big college chapel. Here is the grave of that scholar

and gentleman who came here to the teaching of slave children A B C and the keeping of petty accounts, but who lived to build an altar upon the very spot where he had seen the children bought, and at it to ordain them ; and before that altar, in that cool and holy sanctuary, it is not hard to pray.

But it is not always easy to do so after all. The glamour of the landing soon passes, and early fears are soon deepened. True, it is all one great ' magic ' from day to day ; how could it be other when Mr. Kipling's Parsee with his cake is just round the corner, and the ' Miracle of Purun Bhagat ' might happen to-morrow ! But there is another aspect of it after all. Here is the real East, packed away in narrow streets where the half-naked workman sits almost continuously at his work, simply going to sleep in his open shop surrounded by his working brethren when he is tired, and waking to go on by the guttering light of an oil lamp all through the Eastern night ; the real East, in festival on some marriage night perhaps, when the street is crowded with a sitting, smoking, drinking crowd, excited by an unmusical din in their own strange fashion, an excitement which only shows itself in glittering eyes and

much expectoration as you press your way through after a black policeman who clears the road in native fashion with feet and hands; or the East in worship, when you lie awake at night to catch snatches of the hour-long sing-song of

'La—ilaha—illa—'llahu; Muhammadu—
Rasulu—'allah.'

(There is no god but God; Mohammed is the apostle of God.) That fierce creed has echoed from the south of France to the China Sea, and from the Siberian Steppes to the Congo forests, and it has rung in the ears of men since Romans heard it on the borders of Syria, and Gordon died to the sound of it in the palace at Khartoum. And it is not mere romance which talks about the 'impenetrable East.' The thing that struck me most on landing first at Port Sudan, and which has grown upon me every day since, is the fact that these men live in what is no less than a different world from that world which we know. It is so hard to express, but there it is. They do not live as we do; that were a little thing; but they do not *think* as we think. Our needs are not, by nature, theirs materially or spiritually; and what moves us, leaves them

unmoved. Rudyard Kipling's famous couplet is a kind of knell to the missionary—or at least to me,—from which he finds it harder to escape than many know in England.

And yet one knows not only where East and West meet, but Who is the common link between. The problem is to discover how we may identify ourselves with Eastern thought so as to become a medium through which our Lord may express Himself to Easterns. We shall not do it by ceasing to be ourselves, or by treating what the West has won of Truth through centuries past as if it were merely a local expression of Truth ; nor, I suspect, shall we do it in any other way than that in which a medium of revelation was given to us in the Person of our Lord—the way which Raymond Lull designated six centuries ago, that of 'love and prayers and the pouring out of tears and blood.' I cannot in anywise forget this. Personally it seems to me that the Mohammedan world is nothing else, now as then, than a challenge to faith ; and that a creed which is explicitly based on the denial of our Lord as we know Him, and which has won victories for that denial, over the Cross, even in our day, constitutes in itself not only

a challenge, but a challenge which the Church as a whole should take up. Perhaps to forge a sufficient answer needs more of the iron of authority and of faith than the Anglican Church can give. But where it is claimed that freedom has given that body intellectual progress and scope denied elsewhere, and Western blood that zeal so conspicuously lacking among the Eastern Orthodox Churches, surely there should be some to constitute a modern crusading Order against Islam, armed with such weapons, and animated, in this age, not by hate but by love.

I do not know ; it may be that it is given to young men to dream what are after all but dreams. I will not say that it is not so. But anyway here, in this island, are a hundred and fifty thousand of those two hundred millions throughout the world for whom Good Friday is a lie, under our flag, at our doors. Whoever attempts anything must essay long silence, seemingly temporary uselessness, and wearisome labour for years at two languages at least, of which one is the hardest in four continents ; and since he will probably come from a busy parochial life, with varied activities and infinite opportunities, he had better be

sure of the plough before he put his hand to it. Alas for the men whose plough deceives them ! And yet even they may hope. As I write it is getting late, and all the varied sounds of an African night, not shutting out the ceaseless song of the sea, come through my windows. There is no moon, but now and again, over a stark black world, the vivid lightning breaks the darkness into light. Though all the hopes of men go out as the flashes which seem to do so little, still for a while they rent the night with promise of the power above.

III

THE STREETS OF THE CITY

You turn out of the Mission enclosure into a very narrow lane which departs into the tortuous maze of the city to the left and right of our wall. Straight in front are a line of Indian shops, such shops as are a common feature of the city this side of the creek. Some of them are very little more than the enlarged entrances of a row of white-walled, corrugated-iron roofed houses in each of which an Indian woman sits most of the day, commonly in scarlet trousers and silver anklets, with a yellow, brick-red or green *shiti* about her head and body. She squats tailor-wise behind a small spread of miscellaneous articles—usually the green leaves and other necessities of betel-nut chewing, and some small piles of oranges, cigarettes and Indian chillies; and at her back, blocking your view of the house, is a kind of pigeon-holed barrier containing nearly always boxes of matches, dolly blues, soap, candles, and paper

twists of tea. She is a grave and busy personage on the whole, and is usually engaged in mending bright clothes or stringing beads when she is not selling two pice worth of goods with the enthusiasm of a transactor of heavy business. In the mud of the street play her children. As you pass, some brownish-white morsel picks itself up out of the dirt, and, scantily dressed in a slip of a shirt, gazes at you with henna-stained eyes.

But pass down the lane. Here is a mosque at once, on your left, the wide open door showing its bare interior, matted floor, and shallow alcove on the Meccan side, before which you can catch a fleeting glance of men, prostrate or bowing in prayer. Round by the left we go towards the Hostel, and you see at once what makes the city so picturesque. A palm hangs over the way, and the green of its leaves, the brown of its nuts, and the white of the wall over which it leans, are thrown up against the vivid blue of the sky beyond. Often it is the one splash of colour in the blue and white of sky and street, unless some gaily dressed natives are coming to meet you.

Here is one. He is a Banyan Indian merchant in bare feet, white trousers, white shirt hang-

ing outside his trousers, and round black ' pill-box ' cap. In his arms is his son and heir dressed for some state visit. The boy wears rich silk or cotton clothes of flaring colours, anklets and bracelets of heavy gleaming silver, and a cap ornamented with a zigzag pattern in green and gold and set with a plume of white feathers. His baby face is stained with henna, and his finger tips are bright red with it too. He is very proud of himself, I think.

But our lane has wound round to the right, and for a few yards you are passing another typical street scene. On the left is the inevitable mosque, and by it a litter of unkempt graves over which fowls and goats are wandering. On the right, heavy cocoa-nut thatches project over raised mud platforms before wattle-daub huts, and the way is narrower yet. Here squat some Arabs, all in white with white turbans, the richest of them with a jewelled and silver crooked dagger in his belt, all looking incorrigibly lazy, very polite, and rather inscrutable. To them a street-merchant is selling steaming hot coffee from a hand urn with hot charcoal beneath it, and in a few minutes he will pass on, clinking his cups to obtain fresh customers. If I could bring

myself to face those cups I should rather like to drink his coffee, but as it is I save my pice. Under the shadow of the eaves, too, a Swahili woman is stirring a copper pan full of brown treacly-looking syrup over a small fire, and that also I am curious about. It looks as if it might be the father of all the 'hard-bakes,' or the grandfather of all the 'jumbles,' but I am certain that if one stopped to inquire one would never get through the city.

Now, however, we are passing between high Arab houses of two or three stories, the ground-floor bare and deserted and dirty-looking, except for a lazing Swahili servant or two on the raised stone bench at the door. Smells delight to linger here, but we are out in a minute and among the bazaars. This is Piccadilly Circus in embryo, with a khaki-clad policeman on duty. His truncheon hangs down visibly, but he will probably go and look for reinforcements if there is trouble. His main duty is to watch the traffic direct itself—or so it seems—and when a string of donkeys meet half a dozen straining labourers, naked to the waist and pushing a heavy trolly-cart, there is sometimes good fun for a minute or two. As there is also a continual stream of

people in a road not more than three or four yards wide, and also a good sprinkling of goats and fowls, there is often plenty of noise and a beautiful mixture of smells.

That excellent Banyan gentleman of the shop yonder will sell you anything. He and his fellows are venerable old men with white beards, European coats, and a peculiar skirt arrangement tied up with a wonderful twist that exhibits a varying length of haply honest brown leg. Their shops are rather dark and very stuffy, but you can indeed buy most things here. The only thing you cannot buy is the thing you want at the moment, but after all you need not come six thousand miles for that experience.

But wait a minute. Let us turn sharp to the left past the high iron gates of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, whose twin towers, with their short spires, have been showing ahead of us between the houses for some time. Here is the row of silversmiths. In fascinating cases are piled really beautiful silver goods, and on the floor squat men in their white cotton garments, sand-papering, filing, hammering and polishing. To the right is a shop you can trust, its walls hung with a strange mis-

cellany of ancient swords and guns, embroidered Arab belts and powder-flasks, necklaces, carved wooden spoons, whips of hippo leather, and twisted iron rubbish that is not thrown away simply because a Banyan, like a Jew, cannot do it. The glass case is full of ebony and silver walking sticks, and they are not expensive either. But I must on ; I could stop any day buying sticks. It adds to the zest of life to have to choose a walking-cane with care before one's daily constitutional, and I keep a score for the purpose.

But this is the glory of the High Street. On the left is the Post Office ; and, right opposite, are two big shops full of Indian, Burmese and Japanese goods, with men selling them in skirts and black hair done up in a ' bun ' behind like the good Singalese that they are. These are the really great shops who live on the mail passenger and empty his pockets with great regularity. Up this street lie the Court House, the English Club, the Bank of India, the shady Victoria Gardens, and the Consulate, a big, white, spreading house with a wide drive and a real lawn and an outlook over really nice gardens to the sea. But we turn the other way ; the street narrows ; we pass the entrance

to the Customs and the way up from the landing beach; men are squatting on the ground here, with rolls of pice and rupees to change all foreign money that comes their way; and at length we are out on the open square before the Sultan's old palace which is now used for Government offices, with the sea glittering before us, dotted with a steamer or two, a fleet of dhows under bare poles to the right, H.M.S. *Pandora* round the corner of the Old Consulate pier, and two or three green islands of the reef behind all. Across the Square, the seven-mile Bu-bu-bu railway ends, its open trucks packed as a rule with clamouring crowds of black and brown skins, and its engine clanging a big bell as it moves down the centre of the street. Just by its terminus is the yellow wall and palm-planted garden of the old Sultan's palace, now being fitted for the residence of Sayyid Halifa and his wife. With luck, we shall see him in his car, wife and child beside him, a courtly smiling gentleman, very picturesque in his rich Arab dress, who shows the reality of his European culture by not wearing European clothes.

We follow the railway, and in a little plunge into the native quarter. I do not know how

to describe it. The white houses have given place to cocoa-thatch, mud walls, and corrugated iron; the Swahili you meet are much darker than the Arabs, the men usually dressed in rather ragged, white, native dress, suggestive of a shirt and skirt, and the women in blue *shitis*, outlined with patterns of the weirdest design—motor-cars, clocks, household furniture, or even balloons—of which one is wound closely round the body from the armpits to the knees and the other worn like a kind of veil. Very many have something on their heads, balanced with a skill a juggler would envy, either a tin can for water, or a bundle of firewood, or even a soda-water bottle, upright and very tempting as a new species of Aunt Sally! Here the sun is intolerably hot on the dusty, sandy, dirty track, and you must pass a good distance before the native city quarter gives place to the native suburb, and that in turn to the open country. A wide creek separates city and suburb, and instead of passing over the bridge we will turn hard to the right down the creek road, shady with cocoanut-palms and almond-trees. First come the new markets, red-tiled, and interesting in the early morning when the country folk have brought in their

THE CREEK, SHOWING LIVINGSTONE'S HOUSE

goods—fruit, fish, livestock, and pottery for the most part. Past these a tall spire lifts itself against the sky, and you are back in Mkunazini.

Let us walk down under the wide-spreading African almond-trees to the edge of the creek, before we turn in at the gate. Across a few hundred yards of water you see a really African and not an Eastern scene, for here the brown huts come down to the water's edge and a fringe of palms behind closes them in. A red roof shows conspicuously in the foreground, a mission property in which a Christ Church student lived in days gone by and did much translation work. A constant stream of dug-out canoes with outriggers, poled by sturdy natives and loaded with women returning from market, are busy at work, while a crowd of children are at play in the water across the flow. You can see the sun glinting on their brown bodies as they jump up. Those two little chaps in the roughest of dug-outs are members of a semi-aquatic brotherhood who visit all the mails and dive for coppers.

Turn, and look up the creek, to where, a quarter of a mile away, the water ends against the Nazi Moja road which leads to the German

Club, Kiungani, and Mbweni. You can just see the wall of a Hindu cemetery beyond it; the cemetery itself touches the sea again, for the city stands on a perfect peninsula. Down the creek is the bridge, with the brown water racing under it as the tide goes down; ancient dhows are stranded on the banks here and there, and the medley of the huts in Malindi push out almost into the stream. And yet, in the prospect, there is greater interest than any these afford. Round that bend is a white house, distinct from the huts in the sun, where Dr. Livingstone lived for some months before the interior swallowed him on a march that ended by a lonely bedside at Ilala. The old Presbyterian might not have owned it, but he died on his knees, and surely he lives to pray.

Turn in at the gate; to pray is our work too. You have seen Arab, Swahili, and Indian since you set out, for Africa and Asia meet here—and Europe also. Our task lies with all three. We have to save Africa from Asia, giving the African a religion which will make him man enough, in the true sense, to stand against the incoming Indian in the world of labour and against Mohammed in the world of faith;

to teach Asia the true philosophy of God that is only written in the Face of Jesus Christ; and to rouse Europe to a realisation that His Kingship has a place in political and social life. The task is hard.

IV

THE HOUSE OF ISLAM

It is hardly possible to doubt that this island on the verge of the Indian Sea is at a momentous crisis in her story. That great Renaissance of the East which has given Japan a Western constitution, Korea a new life, China a republic, and India the birth-throes of national consciousness, has spread indubitably throughout the House of Islam also. Our eyes here perceive the East as it is not possible to do at home, and we are amazed by what we see. Take, for example, that incredible rush on the part of Hindu and Mohammedan in India to include sixty million hitherto outcast pariahs within their folds because of the recent creation of electorates for the Indian Legislative Council—millions who might be subject to the moulding of the Christian spirit to-day if we had stopped quarrelling at home to think about them. That movement towards the masses across the water has its counterpart

with us. Only the other day a strong deputation waited on the Consul-General from the 'Young Arab' Club, asking for a decree of compulsory education throughout the island, a request not yet granted, but sufficiently indicative of what must come almost certainly in our generation. It is impossible not to wish it, as one stands any night in the bazaars to watch the muttering crowds gathered round the grotesque pictures on sale there of victorious Turks bayonetting thousands of terror-stricken Italians on impossible redoubts, and as one realises that this fever is a kind of last symptom in a religion that is ceasing to be a *Faith* although propping itself up as a *Fanaticism.* For the true Faith of Islam, as a Faith, is disappearing. Asked the other day, the matron of the Government Native Hospital, a woman of many years' experience, said that the city was losing its religion in immorality. And what does that mean? It means that the old restraints are going, that the people have looked on the West, and that the sight has turned their heads. Just this last month or two the Sunday native dances across the creek have become exhibitions, on the part of the Swahili women of the streets, of European

ballet and skirt dances in European dress. I can but hint at what this means. The bishop was told last week that only two mosques in the town can gather their requisite forty worshippers for the Friday 4 A.M. liturgical prayers, and the Consul-General has said that the Government is going to build the mosque in a new cemetery because the leading Arabs are not religiously eager enough to pay for it themselves. I may be wrong, but I am myself convinced that our part of the East is becoming ashamed to pray. Prayer does not seem to them to be a part of that Western progress which they would imitate. And let us beware, for an East that does not pray means the introduction of a new and terrible factor in the development of the race.

Now Islam has had its defenders among a certain class of Western writers and travellers, but even among these the tide is turning. Sir Harry Johnston has recently published a stringent criticism. The truth seems to be that the Crescent destroys the primitive social and religious life of native tribes, as surely as does Western civilisation, but itself, bound as it is to go down before the spread of knowledge, has no real strength to give them. Here,

for example, the Sultan, of whom I have seen a good deal, seems to take up that kind of attitude towards his religion which the educated but decent Roman of the late Empire took towards Paganism. It is an attitude of tolerant modification. At his institution he swore the oath of allegiance on a Koran which no Christian was allowed to touch, it being solemnly carried in by the chief mullahs; it was returned to the keeping of Christians, and I with many others have handled it at the Consulate. By traditional Mohammedanism he ought to have several wives and keep them secluded; he not only treats his one wife with an educated courtesy, but offends Arab taste by his definite morality. The Prophet cursed all pictures as idolatry; in his study a large portrait of the King stands upon his table, and others decorate the walls. Or again, one of the most striking signs in the town is that the African priest of the Mission tells his bishop that he has never had so many Arab visitors as now, men who come by night to ask what our religion is and who *submit cases to him for a Christian judgment which they obey rather than the Mohammedan law of the Government courts.*

Or again, Ramadhan has just come and

gone, and with it a strange stirring among the Moslem leaders. The decay of Islam as a religious power was really apparent to the older Arabs. His Highness endeavoured to bring about a great open-air demonstration at the close of the month, on modern lines, but this scheme totally broke down, partly through the apathy of the people, partly through the internal bitterness of the sects. Recently, too, we have had case after case of young Arabs sufficiently Europeanised to give up their faith, although politically they back up the Sheikhs who are in a frenzy of excitement over the Constantinople and Tripoli troubles, and join eagerly enough in the yells of a crowd which to-day greeted the announcement of the declaration of a state of war in the Near East. They know themselves in what a state of transition their world is. The best among them chafe at their own impotence, and forget their instinctive idleness to curse at a situation which stirs the blood and allows no outlet for it. But to read that the old order is giving place to a new with a rapidity almost beyond belief, is one thing; it is another to watch it from day to day. Watching, one realises how vital is the question of our attitude in the crisis.

Beyond doubt the key to the situation lies with us. Yet the Church needs stability, assurance, and devotion along practical lines of institutionalism and self-discipline; the Government, a settled policy fearlessly carried out. For lack of these things, Religions and Governments have failed a score of times in just such a crisis as this; and—God help us!—it has ever been a sign of doom that kings and priests have sat blind in their palaces while the foundations rocked beneath them.

Now it is sometimes urged against Missions that they destroy the foundations of heathen society without providing a substitute which the people will accept, but what has struck me overwhelmingly during my few months so far out here is the upheaval of Eastern life by Western civilisation apart from Missions. I believe that far more significant than the entry of the East into competition with the West—'The Yellow Peril'—is the entry of the West into the life of the East. There is no room to write much, but I believe we are watching the disappearance of nearly all that is distinctly Eastern before the inevitable flood of European civilisation. The new wine must burst the old bottles. At home there is much talk of

the wisdom and culture of the East, and no doubt the East has wisdom and culture to contribute towards the final enriching of the Human Race; but here at least the West appears so immeasurably stronger, yes and *better*, that one is forced to conclude that the East will largely disappear before it. Hence I often wonder if our missionary policy is based on the wisest foundation. For myself I believe, for example, that all that is essentially *Swahili* must vanish before the European. To begin with, what future has their language save that of another Erse or Gaelic? For even if you could compel the flood of white settlers to learn an adequate Swahili, you could not prevent the natives learning English. And why should you? Why withhold from the children of to-morrow a new language, rich in literature, universal in diffusion, and incomparably abler in expression? Surely the only hope for the Swahili lies in the possibility of his assimilating very much that is socially and intellectually as well as religiously Western, and our best plan would be to give him these from a Christian source that he may be strong to resist those evils that are bound to flow in from the secular. There may, of course, be

treasures in his national consciousness which should be saved, but I am inclined to think that if these be worth anything in the long run, they will be able to save themselves. Meanwhile one asks in vain of those who talk so glibly, a list of such salvage. In religion indications are sometimes given; but, however limited my personal experience, it has so far invariably been that the one obstacle to such enrichment, and the one indifferent element, is that of the native himself. And in this he is wiser than we. He knows his own weakness; we have no confidence in our own strength.

In any case the significance of it all is that the Church, deaf and blind, is having much of her work done for her; that another plough is irresistibly turning up virgin soil; and that every process of the parable, here of hardening, there of weeds, is proceeding apace about her. On the one hand, superficial Islam is spreading. Recently, reviewing the diocese, the Bishop pointed to a formerly pagan land of some sixty thousand square miles south of the Rovuma river, from which every person who has recently crossed that river into Mission territory has been Mohammedan, and in whose biggest town (which, when we passed through it in the

'eighties on the way towards Nyasa, had no mosques), the twentieth has recently been built.

On the other hand, behind her outposts, traditional Islam is demoralised and doomed. She will not, indeed, rot slowly as Eastern Orthodoxy has done under conditions not so unlike; we may hope better things of her than that. But where is any adequate attempt to direct the thousands of hurrying feet into the highway of the Kingdom of God? Where is the spirit of Loyola and Lull? Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

V

KINYOZI

Two days after my arrival, as I sat writing at my desk with a thousand scents, in which frangipanni predominated, coming in at the open door, I was startled by the sudden exclamation ' Ram—Ram ' at my side. I turned in haste to see the voice which spake with me, and being turned I first saw the barber.[1] Despite his greeting, which might as well have been the cry of a savage about to scalp me, I soon discovered that he was an entirely civilised person of a most agreeable disposition, whose sole interest in my scalp lay in the clipping of its hair. Professionally, he has interests also in one's chin. That, however, I resisted, until one day, being at once in a painfully unshaven condition and also in an incorrigibly lazy one, I consented to go through what turned out to be one of those experiences to be wished for once only in a lifetime. Squatting on the floor, he produced from a little brown bag (his

[1] Swahili, 'Kinyozi.'

inseparable companion): a small copper bowl elaborately carved; a cake of brown soap; a rag, which being unwound disclosed a shaving brush of ancient pattern; and a razor in a much battered case. He politely begged the boon of enough water to fill his bowl. That granted, he lathered me firmly but respectfully, cleaned his fingers in the bowl, pushed back my head in the chair, and raised his weapon. I closed my eyes, and resigned my life into the hands of Providence. In a little, the repeated release of my head and the rapid return of pressure each time caused me to open them, when I perceived that the heathen was gracefully wiping his razor at each stroke upon the palm of his hand. But it was not this which taught me to be firm upon the subject of shaving; rather it was the spectacle of the same brush on a Banyan chin one morning in the streets of the city. . . .

We are, however, such friends now that I am sure he will forgive me if I describe his fascinating dress. He wears, as to the feet, the loose, heelless slippers of India without socks or stockings; and in the place of trousers is an arrangement which always baffles me. It is certainly a sheet, but were I asked to wear a

sheet I should infallibly wear it like a skirt. Not so the barber: he comes of an age-long civilisation. His sheet therefore is gathered at the waist and allowed to encase the legs like two wide bloomers to the knee. But this engaging arrangement would seem to lack on the score of decency, since there is no fastening of any kind, and the free winds of heaven display great lengths of brown leg at every gust. And yet one's ultimate fear is never accomplished, no, not in half a gale. In the end the intelligent observer gives up the hopeless puzzle, and passes to an examination of the shirt and European coat above the sheet. A turban circles his head, and a heavy moustache curls up to ears decorated in a manner calculated to arrest the wandering gaze of the most restless customer. The lobe of the ear is bored to admit of a chain at least eight inches long, from which a brass ball is suspended by a hook. Then the chain curls affectionately round the outside of the ear, descends over the top, and passes through a boring there to link up finally with the hook in the lobe.

Despite his ears, I have an enormous respect for my barber. He is perhaps thirty, and the

most thrifty, contented, patient, and yet insistent of men. The triumph of this latter quality lies in the fact that he takes a rupee off me every time he attends to my hair, and this despite persistent 'hunger-striking' on my part, as well as reasoned arguments based on a comparison of even Parisian tariffs. For the rest, the manner of his living and his business is proof enough. He shares a three-roomed house with eight more young men of his caste; he has but one holiday in the year, and that of only two nights and one day—bitter nights for us since the colony of him and his adjoins the wall of our compound; and he keeps a wife, several children, his parents, and a collection of sisters-in-law, in distant Bombay. The years of his exile are nine. Upon three hundred and sixty-four days in each one of them, wet or fine, he sets out in the morning with his bag. He will squat anywhere and shave you. You may see him in some den with the half-barbered head of a Banyan in his hands, or by the washing place of a mosque with a bearded Mussulman under treatment. For my rupee he will squat on the baraza as long as I care to keep him, and come up smiling at the end. For two such

customers he will walk four miles, and I believe that he would as cheerfully trudge eight for one. And the hours of his labour depend exclusively upon the demand.

We do not find it easy to talk, for he has no English, and I as yet little Swahili and no Gujerati. Moreover, his Swahili is of a peculiar kind, whereof every verb gets no further than the infinitive mood, and the personal pronouns reign supreme in the pronominal sphere. His universal negative is a word which means 'this is not the place,' and if one is firm enough at any time to decline his attentions, it must be in the terms of a formula which, being interpreted, runs, 'This is not the place to cut'! With regard to his inquiries concerning my domestic arrangements at home, I have been compelled to say, 'This is not the place to marry'; but it is with greater satisfaction that I remark with emphasis at intervals in our acquaintance, 'This is not the place of silver.' However, by such means we have disclosed to each other our earthly hopes and fears, and in a like way I have come a little at his for heaven.

That began in an unlucky happening some months ago. While waiting the unfastening of his leather bag, I was clever enough to slay

a mosquito, the colour of whose crushed remains indicated that he had been engaged in crime; and I naturally appealed for praise. But Ram-rasul was horrified, for the pitiful corpse upon my arm, he pointed out, might be that of his own lamented brother if not of my honoured grandfather. I expressed certainty with regard to my grandfather, but pushed inquiries. I found that he worshipped the great god Ram, a distant relation by connections (involving unintelligible Gujerati) of the Lord Vishnu, but that his worship involved neither prayers ('This is not the place to pray'!) nor liturgical devotions, and but one feast. Ram-rasul did not know the meaning of the feast, but he invited me to see it. Accordingly, a few nights later, I was guided by unforgettable noises to a street corner at which Ram was enjoying the offering of his worshippers. Three men with tom-toms kept up incessantly the most irritating of beatings, and a score of others danced round a fire to a kind of Red Indian shuffle, armed with sticks, which they beat the one against the other at every whirl. The spectators howled a chant, and leapt eagerly into the place of an exhausted performer when he dropped out. Not that any

one seemed much excited; indeed, all scattered regularly enough when the Swahili policeman appeared. But with his going they returned; and I lapsed into fitful slumber later on, with a Ram-Ram-Ram chorus borne on the music of tom-toms for a lullaby.

And yet Ram-rasul is near the Kingdom. It was after our talk that, having made his usual collection of my admittedly auburn hair on the ground, he straightened himself and paused before his going. Pointing gravely to a crucifix on my wall, he said in his queer language, '*Your God loved.*' 'No,' said I, '*loves*'. . . . But since I have reflected that my own hopes for Ram-rasul rest on yet another saying, and that an Apostolic one. It is that God *is* Love.

VI

BY-PATHS THROUGH COCOA-NUTS AND CLOVES

To-day the country folk were still coming in to market as we left the town by the North Road which, crossing the creek that makes the city a peninsula by a stone bridge lined with crouching beggars, runs first through the native Indian bazaar. The sandy way is only a few yards wide at the best, and down its centre runs a small-gauge railway, whose ridiculous engine clangs a bell continually as it goes, to clear people off the track. The sun is already well up in the azure sky, and it is getting hot among these dusty, confined, and over-stuffed shops. They stretch on either side, Eastern rather than African in their construction, the shopkeeper sitting tailor-like on the mud floor of his raised doorway, and selling the strings of bright beads, the shining tin-ware, the many-coloured clothes, and the brown pottery all about him. 'Him,' but often it is 'her,' and she makes a bright splash of colour in scarlet

ON THE BRIDGE

or yellow trousers, silver anklets, purple-green or brick-red flowing *shiti*, and nose ornaments. Children, scantily clothed in a kind of shirt, pick themselves up out of the dirt to make way for us, staring with henna-stained eyes. The track itself is crowded with Swahilis bringing in country produce on their heads—a big bunch of bananas, a bow-shaped bundle of bending sugar-cane, a basket of platted cocoa-nut leaves heaped with the nuts, or a load of firewood you would not conceive it possible to carry. Now and again we make way for an Arab on his donkey, dressed almost exactly as Abraham was, except that perhaps that silver-handled dagger in his girdle is too elaborately chased. He is preceded by a servant, possibly a slave, driving other donkeys well laden for the markets; and then the crowd closes in again, and the noise flows on from the human river that it is.

But in a little the houses thin, we spin round a corner, down a short hill, and are out in a moment among the *shambas*. These are the plantations that cover the island; and since there is no artificial boundary between them, and cultivation spreads only in patches, it means that the entire island is one stretch of

tropical woods. It is sown with little low-thatched, brown mud-walled homesteads, each with its small court fenced in by cocoa-nut matting, with miniature huts for fowls and tools. Here and there these cluster into a village, the grass worn from between the houses, and the whole buried in the banana thickets which almost invariably surround them. But we will wait for more description until we are well in the country.

Our road is running by the still, blue sea, fringed with a coral beach and high cocoa-nut palms, and dotted, like emeralds in the sunlight, with the islands of the reef. Looking back over our shoulders through the naked slender trunks, the city lies glittering in a white huddle of roofs on its long promontory. The white roof line is irregular, and it is broken by the many-coloured flags of the foreign consulates, some bigger houses, and the thin spire of our English Mission sanctuary. Sanctuary, indeed, where once the slave-trade centred for all this coast, and where now the body of one of our greatest bishops lies behind the high altar. We were at the Sacrifice before his grave only this morning, lifting the immaculate Offering to the Father for all these people so

hard to move, so difficult to teach, so dear to God. But to-day our object is to penetrate to a distant corner of the island to see if we may perhaps plant an out-school there and one of our newly trained African teachers.

The road leads towards the quaintly named Bu-bu-bu, but at about the fifth mile-post, and before we near the village, we can see a gaunt ruin by the sea, on high ground. It is not old, though, for only a century ago nothing stood there at all. Now, however, the walls are in a last decay, hung thickly with tangled creepers, and Bet-el-Mtoni has taken its place among the many ruined palaces of the island. It was in 1840 that Sayyid Said, Imam of Muscat and conqueror of East Africa, moved his court from Arabia, and we are passing the remains of his greatest palace. Every new sultan built one new palace or more, and most of them were deserted on his death, the climate and the vegetation soon ruining them. Sayyid Said once kept an establishment of some two thousand slaves, concubines, and wives here, and the place was busy with life. There were great baths, stables, and out-houses, and his women fared well, for Said was a good father and a kind husband. He himself aided early attempts

at the suppression of the slave-trade. But even so, Bet-el-Mtoni was the seat of all that doomed Arab and Moslem civilisation, for here women were encouraged to be ignorant, wanton, and busy only with trivial occupations, and here the master was a despot with no one to stay his lust and cruelty. It chanced that Said was unusually moderate; but he was good despite his social system. That system permitted his son, the Sultan Bargash, to flog to death a sister for smiling at a European, and whip a wife so badly with his own hands that death resulted. And even Said's end was hastened by his excesses in the harem.

So Bu-bu-bu has sad memories as one turns into it. To our left, as we spin down the short hill, a low stone mosque resounds with the sound of prayer, for Ramadan began this week, and we notice the invariable features—the little alcove built out Mecca-wards, the place of washing, and the bare interior. The village itself is humming with cheerful life. The Government has built one of its markets here, and under the red-tiled roof, on great raised slabs of stone, lie fish and fruit in rich profusion. Every one is chattering away, and the

THROUGH A CLOVE PLANTATION

sellers are doing a brisk trade, for during this month's fast more food is sold (to be eaten between 6 P.M. and 6 A.M.) than in any other month throughout the year. In that corner is a man busily husking cocoa-nuts in the milky stage of their development, for when the sun has set, pious Moslems, who have not tasted food or drink since its rising, begin the night's orgy with these *madafu*.

Now we are away for the twelfth mile-stone with the last big village behind us. The road is more than beautiful, especially when it dips to cross the sluggish brown streams from the slight hills on our right, flowering rushes and bamboos creeping down to the waterside, and big fish swimming lazily by. The country stretches away, sometimes in wide sloping meadows, sometimes in close plantations. Here a great wood of cocoa-nuts rises on either side, the waving green fans atop of the long bare brown poles, and the blue sky over all; there close-set cloves, with thick, glossy green leaves, are planted in avenues which remind you of the hop-fields of Kent or the vineyards of Provence; and everywhere the little patches of *muhogo* (cassava) rise, shoulder-high, from their red ridges of earth. Sometimes a flight of

little weaver-birds goes whirling by, and sometimes the African shrike cries from a thicket with a note like air bubbling sweetly through water and with a timbre reminiscent of the cuckoo. Goats and humped African cows are tethered here and there where the grass is rich, and their bleating comes shrill and clear in the pure air from homesteads out of sight.

When we reach our milestone, we turn off the road on to a narrow *shamba* path, and plunge into all this luxuriance for ourselves. We are on one of those tracks which run everywhere in Africa, and which one bicycles along with varying luck. It is only two or three feet wide, a red streak before you in this rich soil; and we swerve round trees at the bottom of miniature hills, or set our backs for a few seconds' strain uphill, at every few yards of the way. Sand makes the way impassable for a quarter of a mile now and again, and we get off, the perspiration pouring from under our sun-helmets, to push our bicycles through the yielding stuff with a fellow-feeling for Pharaoh Merenptah, and an unreasoning hatred of the sandwich-boxes. Then we mount again. But here sharp coral crops up, and one of us is not quick enough to avoid a spill. While we brush

down, the temperature becomes too great, and we wheel towards the shade of a mango for five minutes with an orange and ten more with a pipe.

It is extraordinarily beautiful in the shade. The country is undulating, and you can see quite far under the trees until the green of clove and palm blend into one and hem you in. The hot air is cooled by a sea breeze even here, and the low hum of insect life comes drowsily on the wind. The whole world is alive with life of one sort or another, from that outpost of *maji moto* ants with their wise antennæ and long yellow bodies busy prospecting on a fallen cocoa-nut branch, to one of the strangest of God's creatures, the million-legged, six- or eight-inch long *jongoo*, whose fat, black, slow-moving body, harmless as he is, is inexpressibly repugnant. A few yards away is a native homestead, a prosperous one seemingly, for its thatched fence extends far under the banana leaves, a small army of fowls and goats are wandering around, and two or three women are in sight grinding corn and drying *muhogo*. The sun, falling aslant through the trees, makes vivid contrasts of light and shade; and there is that familiar fragrant scent of rich earth and springing plants which recalls instantly holidays

in other lands. Scent is more potent than sight or sound to recall the past. As I lie, I have but to close my eyes to be again on the banks of the Granta on a hot June afternoon, or to hear the Tay purling over the stones in the woods above Dunkeld. The patter of a mule's hoofs spoils the dream, for that Arab, rich in his magnificent gold-laced coat, white turban, and silver-handled dagger, cannot be part of any Western dream. But we must follow him.

The path winds on, now in a valley among the lush grasses and high reeds of a streamlet that broadens here into a washing-place with three brown imps busy in it, and now up a stony way whose coral points tell of the sea. In a few moments we sight it through the thinning tree-trunks, and are out now by the Government bungalow in a perfect paradise. We climb to the high baraza while the boys pick *dafu* for us and unpack our sandwiches, and there, a-sprawl in easy chairs, gaze our fill. To the north the coast bears round in a series of tiny bays until the farthest is crowned by a lighthouse. They are one vivid colour in the sun. The green of the banks crowds down to the very edge of jagged, dark, low cliffs, which give, in a hundred glittering points, on to the

pure white of the coral sand. Then comes the sea, first the edge of foam, then a blue so clear and translucent that the rude brown timbers of that white-sailed dhow show plainly to the very keel. Each bay seems to have its little islet, itself a miniature of the whole. In one a group of nearly naked figures are clearly outlined as they work at their nets, and from a boat putting in to them from the sea comes the rich deep boom of the conch shell which every fisherman uses.

Our first business is with a boy here who is a Christian and in charge of the house. He can rarely get to his duties, and my companion is busy with him. It seems a long way to come for one sheep, but not longer than the shepherd of the parable went over the mountains to search for his hundredth, and it is part of a missionary's business to acquire that divine indifference to numbers that the New Testament teaches us. As I wait, however, my cup of happiness brims over: the monthly German mail from Europe rounds the point! We thought we might see her; but now we know that the end of this day, when one is weary and the sunlight gone, will be with friends.

Yohanna dealt with, I am impatient to make

trial of the sands, and it is our plan to walk to the lighthouse along them, and then return through the *shambas* to the house for a cup of coffee before our ride home. Two dogs here are obviously friends of *Wazungu*,[1] and they come out to accompany us. We descend by a steep, deadly-sharp, rocky path, and grind our heels on the shore in a minute. Here it is all coral, broken pieces of every shape and kind littering the ground like stones on the beach at Brighton; and we pick our way over them till the sand crops out, itself just coral dust with here and there a shell or two of often exquisite colouring. Maybe we took two hours to make that lighthouse, but they were two wonderful hours. The years slip away easily still, and you become simply the Robinson Crusoe of your boyhood's play, only on a veritable tropical island now. At every turn there is something new. We explore dark caves that wind up probably into the forest, because there is much singing of crickets in them. We bathe for a few seconds in one place where a shelf of flat rock under an overhanging creeper-covered ridge makes an ideal bath-room—but even this delicious, almost lukewarm water may

[1] Europeans.

not be enjoyed long for fear of the sun on one's spine, and we wear our sun-helmets all the time. Then on, clinging occasionally to jagged coral points to round a bend, or crossing swiftly a bare stretch of sand from shade to shade. In one place we lighted on a perfect natural aquarium, perhaps six feet long, three feet broad, and four or five feet deep, its bottom ablaze with strange weeds and corals, above which swam ceaselessly some fifty fish, barred with rainbow hues, wee and wonderful. Peering in, the queerest creatures present themselves, and we see that the beautiful floor of the pool is really spread with death. A species of star-fish (as I suppose) is busy there. He has five long, brittle, many-tentacled arms, and a mouth hidden in the centre of a body no bigger than a threepenny piece. With one arm he clutches tightly the innermost point of a hole in the rock, and with the other four in constant motion, he waits for his prey. The rocks are black with these, and at first sight you fancy they are a kind of water-weed. Probably the small fish and remote marine creatures are no wiser—to their death. But one could peer into that pool all day.

We are a little tired, however, as we climb to

the lighthouse to visit another Christian, the terribly isolated white man in charge. Then we plunge into a maze of little paths which thread everywhere the small patches of cultivated land and the great stretches of well-wooded country. Here, a few hundred yards from the coast, we are in a succession of villages each practically invisible from its next neighbour, so thick are the trees. In the afternoon sun it is very peaceful. An old woman, returning with her water-pot, directs us to the main ox-path, and we skirt native houses at every turn. There is a suggestion of the peace of an English village about everything, not disturbed even when a couple of dogs run out to greet our own, nor when a domestic trouble obtrudes itself in the shape of a naked black toddler who emerges from the trees crying for her mother, precisely as she would do if she were white! But it is a sad walk even so. Now and again we come to a clean, often new, hut which is suspiciously silent. We peer round; Mecca-wards is the inevitable niche which tells that the Crescent has won here before the tarrying Cross has taken the field. In many cases, but a few years ago, there would have been no such mosque. But the Indian shopkeeper has come,

now that the Government launch runs here once a week and the Government road has pierced the *shambas* so far, and wherever he comes the mosque goes up and the converts come in. It is a religion at once easy, Eastern, respectable, and patriotic, and in practice there are no disabilities. A wide and broad highway is spread before the sheep; small wonder that they tread it. We come to make known a straight and narrow way; small wonder that they miss it.

But our task is made harder yet. We are not left long to puzzle out this problem of the identification of a Christian Government with a Mohammedan Sultanate, by which, whereas the shopkeeper puts up his mosque, the Government erects its bungalow and builds its roads without a thought for religion; for we are offered another conundrum in a minute. At the shop (under a glaring advertisement of well-known cigarettes and equally well-known soap!) sit a crowd of natives, boys and men. We go up to buy a handful of bananas at the rate of sixteen for a penny, and stop a while to talk to them. Then we hear that there is a Government school in the place after all, though we had been told that it was closed, and a brief inspection sends us out well knowing that our

errand has been useless. We cannot build a school to compete with this, whose cement floor, English desks, black-board, maps, and books are the pride of the native schoolmaster and the outcome of a seemingly inexhaustible Government purse. Even if we could, it would be bad policy to put one of our all too few teachers down here when there are fifty villages around without a school at all; and yet it would have been an ideal centre. Well, the *serkali* [1] is in first, and we must leave it. It is our English *serkali*, in fact, officered by English officials and ruled by the Foreign Office; but the bewildering theory of modern policies makes it nominally the *serkali* of the Sultan. And so here the Koran is daily taught; and the coming of Christian England means, for this village, roads, a lighthouse, and the better teaching of Islam. Our British Christianity prescribes to Christ His limits. He may be King in the churches, but not in parliament houses.

After I had set my pen to that last paragraph, I went out into the night to think of it all. Standing on the edge of our flat roof, the creek, dry and empty now for all its yards of sand and mud, and the huts beyond backed

[1] Government.

by cocoa-nut palms, lie bathed in a flood of soft white moonlight. It is all incredibly wonderful. The air is full of sound, but sound as it were detached and remote—the hoarse guttural cries of the squirrel-like *kombas* in the distant palms; the thin, incessant shrilling of the cicalas; now and again the sharp barking of pariah dogs from some tortuous lane behind me; occasionally the coarse laughter of a woman, or loud men's voices that strike harshly on the ear; and at steady intervals the monotonous, dully-savage, and half-frenzied chant of Islam's stagnant creed from packed mosques hidden in the huddle of huts over there. It is God's world for all this. I wonder if there is anything more beautiful to be seen than the white glistening of the moon on the rustling cocoa-nut palm fronds of the garden, or its sheen on that banked cumulus cloud which hangs over this picturesque half-Eastern, half-African city. . . . There! The clock in our thin spire has rung out a late hour, and I must close. These swiftly passing days here would be sad in their helplessness were it not for a thought that dominates them all. There is no time with God. He who died for this wonderful world lives for it, too; to-morrow I shall plead the

everlasting sacrifice of the one and drink of the wells of strength whose source is in the other; and we shall be one day nearer that certain hour when the Lord who sits above the water-floods shall stir up His strength and come among us.

VII

THE FRENCH MISSION

When Innocent Sebastian James Miguel de Lord—which is not his name, but the kind of thing—was admitted to the company of men christened, his parents were 'At Home' that Sunday morning, and I was of the elect invited. Miguel had the distinction of being a first-born as well as a son, and his mother was indubitably pleased that a man was born into the world. She is a slight, rather dark, pretty girl, with a taste in her dresses all to her credit. This morning she looked well, and entirely happy, and her little gold earrings rang as she welcomed each guest.

The house was a tall narrow one in a main street, and we climbed up a steep stair decorated with cocoa-nut palm branches, to a wide hall on the first floor from which opened several small rooms. The hall was full of as strange an assortment of guests as can well be imagined, from a be-turbaned Arab in a gorgeous *joho*

and a sash full of daggers, to our latest Indian arrival, a very dark gentleman married to an Eurasian, who is immaculately Western in his dress and by profession a veterinary surgeon, with a knife that is unwilling to stop short at horse-flesh. Our lives hang on him, incidentally, because he inspects meat in the bazaars. When not otherwise engaged he attends my ministrations, and, by way of distinction, claims to be 'High Church' in tendency, though profoundly evangelical in his upbringing. He is perhaps a shade forgetful that charity vaunteth not herself.

Our host, a rising Goan, dived through the press and impelled us toward that room which contained other guests of honour. It was a small room, and it was quite full, after the suburban fashion of a 'pleasant evening' in Ealing or Hammersmith. The chairs defied defeat in an unbroken rank round the walls, and one steered to a vacant one through a small army of little tables looking forlorn in the middle. I had one frantic handshake with Miguel's mother, and then settled down breathlessly to the refusal of all sustenance save the conventional glass of champagne. A succession of kindly simple people bore sandwiches

dyed a rich yellow with mustard, intoxicants of every nationality, sherbet in iced tumblers, cigars offering immediate martyrdom, and cigarettes upon which one fell in prospect of a release from saying No !

My champagne waved in the direction of Miguel and my cigarette honestly going, I had leisure to look round, and was immediately lost in philosophic speculation. What wretch can have introduced into the island (where every prospect pleases) the decorative schemes of the English lower middle-class (where every art is vile) ; or is it only that there is something akin between the spirit of old Portugal in Indian blood, and the spirit of the hybrid Britisher who is striving to attain to the circumstance of the nobility ? At least a series of little mirrors, in plush frames with painted birds upon them, wandered round the walls between rickety gilt brackets and enlargements of family portraits. A useless piece of furniture which was neither honest sideboard nor practical cupboard, hung out festoons of laced-dooley in one corner, utterly unable to support the dignity of a really beautiful piece of carved Indian ivory. The individuals on the chairs hid the rest, and a strangely pathetic array

they made. There was every Indian who aspires to be a Goan, and every Goan who aspires to be an Englishman, and a few Eurasians who aspire not to aspire at all on account of their unquestionable heritage. Two silent sallow little girls in pink, with brown boots and white stockings and short skirts that exhibited much lace at the knee, sipped iced sherbet opposite to me, and a really delightful Indian beside them could hardly move for the starch in his collar. Then I heard a voice cry my name, and saw that three priests had entered the room. We eddied together into a corner between two windows, whereby I lived to write the tale.

Now it is because these three priests impressed me so much—not so much by their individuality as by their type—that I can say the horrid things about them that are necessary. Yet one did but behold three black-cassocked men in silk to honour Innocent Sebastian, with beards suggestive of having been denied for some time the luxury of trimming, and with that indescribable something about them common to certain classes in the Latin countries. One was ruddy and lively in a pleasantly simple way, and it was he who

told me of his visit to Alsace three years ago now, to see little nephews and nieces whom he had not beheld before and did not expect to see again. He, too, spoke of a brother who had shared his seminary life and was now a voluntary recruit, for missionary purposes, to the lowest Indian caste, so that he could no longer walk on the pavement with his blood-relation nor share so much as a glass of water with him. Not that this mattered so much after all, for they would never, in all probability, meet again. His superior was of a different caste, a rather higher type of South German, I imagine. He served once on the West African coast, but was recalled for Canadian service. One morning his Father-Rector got a letter from the Bishop-General of the Order in Paris, and Father Franz caught the next mail for tropical East Africa. He has been out six years without a furlough, and, as he is still fit, sees no reason to expect a return unless he is wired for to-morrow for Kamchatka or Timbuctoo. From him I learned that an old *père* who has been fifty years here had the joy of saying mass that morning, but 'he hopes to die soon.' From him, too, came a genuine compliment on our Bishop, his friendly courtesy,

theological learning, and 'broad-mindedness' —a compliment the more brave as there is an undoubted superiority in certain directions on our side. And then I was introduced to the Goan father.

From him I learned that between them they speak six languages, and conduct their work in four, although English is the language of their common-room. It was he, too, who sketched their manner of government, the Bishop of the Vicariate being supreme on the spot, though subject to the direction of the Bishop-General in Paris on some matters, and preserved from controversy by a common relation to Propaganda. I learned also of the homes that awaited them when Africa tells in the long run—that is if they do not drop at their post. It depends, it appears, upon one's province; but for all there is a sheltering mother-house in the end, either in America or France or Germany or England, which will offer you as bare a little room as that you occupy now in the Catholic Mission, with as tawdry a reception-room for state occasions, and as gravely meagre a table. These things also I learned by inference and questioning, and there was no proud boasting.

Father Franz lent me his umbrella, and I came out into the rain. Of course, there is a great deal to be said against them. It is the peasant stupidity of faith, the seminary training, the machinery that broke Tyrrell's heart and made Newman hold his pen and grit his teeth, that makes it possible. Nor may the results be always good, because there is little genius about this work and you have to dig for enthusiasm. But these men have surrendered utterly to the will of God, and I am abased before the dignity of it.

VIII

AFTER HIS LIKENESS

Last Sunday a disorderly little crowd hurried through the side streets behind the Mission in a rude procession to the burning ghaut—such as it is—a couple of miles away by the sea. The still hot sunlight of the afternoon fell garishly on the uneven, unkempt houses, and where I saw them there chanced to be no green of tree or bush, or scarlet of a woman's dress. The thirty odd people were all men, middle-aged or old for the most part; and although all were dressed alike in that peculiar low-draping waist-cloth of the Hindi, several stood out for notice as the crowd passed. A tall, thin-faced man bore the body in his arms, though two others helped him from time to time—the body of an old man, I think, draped closely in a crimson covering rather faded and torn, lying on a rough stretcher of untrimmed wood. In the closer press behind a short stout elderly person, naked to the waist, with hair thin but rather greasily

plastered back on his head, offended somehow by the yellow whiteness of his body. Behind him again a group of chattering people bore strange burdens: one an armful of dry sticks and straw and leaves, another a lighted lantern, another a can of oil, another an axe and a bundle of faggots. Their companions seemed much alike, with loose well-worn Indian leather shoes, scanty cotton cloths, faded black caps, and a general air of poor workmen who could ill afford time even for a burying. There were no prayers at all, but as yet there was no mocking or jesting either, only that disorder which, nevertheless, had a vague sense of business about it, and that restless hurry down the stifling street.

It chanced that they were passing an ill place when I met them. A drunken Swahili woman not yet old but coarse and brutish beyond telling—one of the dead wrack of humanity that every city tosses out to God to remind Him of the justice of the curse—bawled and danced obscenely in their path. A leader of the Indians pushed her to one side, and she fell back, her one scant *shiti* slipping from her, among a group of her companions, who received her with jeers and curses. But the proces-

sionists did not so much as spare a glance. They pushed resolutely by, urged neither by dignity nor by sorrow nor by prayer, but by their haste. It is hard to convey the impression of that passing, but it was as if these were men without faith, and therefore without fear or love, and yet men who faced the grim issues purposefully.

. . . . . .

Some hours later the day died in a silent waning of the light, while the young moon and the intense stars stole out as silently. Southward of the road which passes between the more Indian half of the town and the creek with its African village beyond, a thin crescent of living silver hung high over a silver-blue infinity which deepened to dark sombre shades that hid the outline of the town. A few trees, as still as the empyrean which outlined them, broke the black sky-line here and there. And every second, too swift to miss and yet too slow to watch, the light of the passing day stole away.

Above the huts of Africa and the high palms, rode, at first in lonely glory, one star. Even when the great hosts had stolen out beside her, she alone cast an arrow of pure light across the dark water, which, at its head, leaped out and

back, or broke into living fire, with the slow swell of the tide. There died soon, too, the outline of the huts and trees beyond. Then a sudden lamp, set in a windowed hut, painted the water by the side of heaven's silver with the coarse glow of earthly gold. The one seemed to lead by a narrow pathway to the dim mysteries of God; the other, by a broader way, to the strange medley of known and unknown in the heart of man. Sounds, too, emphasised the distinction. From far away came screamingly now and again the noise of a car returning from a visit, this dull Sunday, to some distant plantation; and one's perception knew instantly what bundle of sensations it carried: the faint scent of a woman's clothes, the fragrance of a cigar, the throb of sullen machinery, and the savour of such talk as one must give at such a time. But from the pageant of the birth of a night came no sound, save only the sighing of the lips of the water for the wide bosom of the sea. Far out and up indeed the morning stars sang together as they set out upon their ordered march which guards the halls of God, but their song had echoes only in the heart.

. . . . . .

And so, as I passed slowly by, too sure to wonder any more and too content to fear, I linked the two scenes of the day together with those enactments which I had not seen but knew. There had been the hasty piling of the still body with fuel soaked in oil, away out there on the hard beach which sweltered in the heat of the sun. The flames had leaped and crackled hideously under the pent-house of iron roofing that was all these exiles could offer the dead in place of the stately ghauts of the Ganges, and the fire had sobbed itself out as the sun went down. Then the poor grey ashes had been scattered, and the hurrying mourners, a few hundred yards up the beach, had removed every trace of pitiful defilement. They had come home along the shore as quickly as they went (I have seen them many times); and as like as not were even now squatting in the close foul atmosphere of cellar or shop, hammering, stitching, or beating iron, as their trade might be. Upon the beach they had left, the new young crescent of the moon shone purely down from her height and transformed even the charred remains of the fire. A tired earth lay still, at peace. A weary sea sank back almost soundlessly to the great depths from which it

must leap restlessly with every tide, but as it sank it carried sad dust—at last, too, at peace. And somehow, somewhither, from the toil and fret and clamour, and from the horror of that street, a soul had torn its way into the calm serene mystery that enshrouds its God. Ah, if this be His likeness, how shall I be satisfied!

IX

THE CHAPEL OF THE THORNS

If you resolutely turn your back upon the city and follow a highly dignified road (first with the native town on the left and the grounds of the Sports Club on your right), and if you then take a sharp turn by an *askari* box across a sandy spit of land fringed with 'rain trees,' which clumsy scuttling land-crabs love by day and fireflies by night, until your path (having now lost the greater part of its claim to respectability) rises rapidly to a big square house fifty yards from the sea, in a grove of palm trees and a plantation of rich flowering shrubs, you will arrive at Kiungani. The walls are very thick, of coral stone and whitewash within and without; the floors are all cement and very uneven; and my room is small but lofty, like the rest all stone and whitewash, and with two windows looking due west over thirty miles of strait to where the hills of Africa proper guard the heart of Livingstone and the

THE COLLEGE ON THE CLIFF

grave of Mackenzie, somewhere in the land for which they died. We see them best when the sun is setting in a clear azure sky.

We are in a bay, the city round the headland to the north. We see her lights at night, and those of Mbweni, a Christian village and the centre of the working of the Sisterhood, round the other horn on the south. You can wander down through the plantation of pine-apples, bananas, cocoa-nuts, mangoes, papai, and other tropical trees and fruits, to the sandy beach with its rippling wonderfully transparent sea—for we get few storms here—with its ever green background of vegetation. Paths lead away behind, past the houses of our native teachers, the football ground, and some native huts, to the road a beneficent Government is rapidly making, and on which there goes every sort of civilised and uncivilised person in every sort of conveyance, from an ox-wagon and a rick-shaw to a landau and a motor-car; then they cross, and plunge into the woods which stretch unbroken all over the island.

The College itself is a big square-built building of two stories, with a straight front pierced with rather small windows. Going through a doorway in the centre, one finds oneself in an

entrance hall, with a library to the right, store-rooms to the left, and a passage straight in front. A staircase from this passage leads to the European rooms on the first floor, with boys' dormitories above, and thence to the flat cement roof; but, beyond the passage, there is a quadrangle, cloistered, and crossed with cloisters in addition. Above the cross-cloisters are senior students' studies. Going straight forward you pass through the opposite side of this court, comprising vestries, a little medicine-room, and so on, to another larger court with the school-room on the right, and various class-rooms, dormitories, and a dining-hall on the left. The north side of the first quadrangle is taken up by the Chapel, the south by the Refectory—a long airy room. It is all very convenient, spacious, clean, and cool as it can be—which is not saying much! And there is a lovely hibiscus in the first court which makes a glorious patch of crimson against the greenery behind.

The Chapel is a lofty well-proportioned rectangular building in a rather curious half-Arab style which is very hard to describe. Still, its windows from within are rather like somewhat wide lancets, and there is a small clerestory

above; the roof is flat, and the whole is built of loose white cement material, pleasantly rough in appearance, and cool. Near the east end three steps rise to a chancel divided from the Chapel by an open teak screen of native workmanship, with five arches, very simple and plain, and then three more rise to the foot-pace of the altar. This is in white and dark brick-red marble, very dignified, and backed by a dorsal of rich blue velvet. I found myself, on a first visit, at one of the fald-stools placed for priests, choir-wise, within the chancel, with the cantors at their lectern just in front and the black faces of the boys below. There were no instruments, but plain-song was beautifully rendered; no seats, but the place of the boys marked out by their books on the mat-covered floor; and iron scroll-work took the place of glass in all the windows, through which are borne the rich scents of Africa and the continuous murmur of insect life. Just outside my window were the crosses of the little cemetery, overhung by a big acacia which was just then a blaze of scarlet, and walled in by sweet frangipanni. Each cross has its own story, mostly of the days when death was very busy among the workers here, and it is a very

sacred spot. Most of these passed through no little sorrow, and they died far from the homeland that is extraordinarily dear to us—or at least to me—and I should like to carve big on the wall above them, 'QUI VICERIT FACIAM UT IS EST COLUMNA IN TEMPLO DEI MEI.'

And while I thought of it all the echo of prayer drew to a close, and we rose for a hymn. How potent is music — the mistress of our emotions! Although the words were in Swahili the tune was familiar enough, and indeed the meaning not obscure. These black lads, drawn, at the end of so many centuries, from some hundreds of miles of heathen country, were singing, as heartily as I once heard it sung by an undergraduate congregation completely filling Great St. Mary's:

> 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Doth his successive journeys run.'

Through a mist I looked up to where, as it seemed to me, the figure of our Lord carved upon His Cross leaned forward with wide arms to take us in. But He is so still there. The bowed Head and tortured Body do not move. Of course they cannot, but for all that they are a parable. HE WAITS.

These eighty odd lads stand for so much.

They are the pick of the mainland schools, but are mostly the sons of heathen parents, drawn from scattered villages, who made their own stand at twelve or thirteen years when they were baptized, and who come here any time between that age and twenty. In the long holiday that distance makes necessary, many go back to entirely heathen surroundings—surroundings in which every kind of pressure from without is brought upon them to accept tribal ceremonies, and with them anti-Christian practices. For the most part, anything which will ruin their new faith is welcome to their parents. Imagine how inconceivably remote from our standards is a home where the mother would rejoice at the loss of her son's virtue! Some, indeed, are the sons of Christians, and during my stay in the College my own room boy was the son of a native Church Missionary Society minister; but for the many there are no such benefits. If they find the Son of Man at all, they must find Him in the furnace of fire. And many do, going through a long and difficult course until they take a certificate as teacher, and then, in naturally dwindling numbers, proceed through long years of discipline, practical work, and study, from reader to sub-

deacon, from sub-deacon to deacon, from deacon to priest. The standard of that last is extraordinarily high. Many are remarkably keen thinkers, and are more likely to develop a new African heresy than to corrupt the Faith through ignorance. Meanwhile there is a reverence and eagerness which are unmistakable.

The school has but two compulsory services, each of some half-hour's duration, at the beginning and end of the day's work. At the Eucharist the servers and other ministers wear red cassocks, and squat, when not at work, on the altar steps against the wall, bare-footed and attentive, and very much at home. Non-compulsory services are Matins and Sext, and Compline after the silence bell the last thing at night. There seems to be always a good congregation for that, crouching anywhere in the dark church, but facing towards the dim side-chapel, whose sheltering curtain is pulled back for the office. It is a tiny sanctuary with a holy air about it. It is here that I make my own daily Offering, at a plain altar of which the reredos is of native carved wood, and consists of pillars twined with thorns which make place for the Tabernacle. I like those thorns,

and especially their place. Thorns He wore, and thorns He wears, and His disciples must not expect to be crowned without them.

In the case of some of the boys, at least, the crowning is visible enough. The story of one such, whom I shall call Cyril since that name has been borne by one who did as he before him, seems to me a peculiarly simple and touching tale. Cyril was a Mohammedan who was born in the Comoro Islands, where his father is wealthy and of high rank in the Sultanate, but he came as a young man to this island, and began to attend a school then open in the native town. From the attraction of secular teaching he passed to the acceptance of religious; and when a little over twenty, he declared himself a Christian, and asked for baptism. Well, converts from Islam are rare here, and his case especially made some stir. He suffered a very great deal of persecution, but finally received the cross. Not long afterwards the Sultan of the Comoro Islands visited His Highness Sayyid Ali, and called Cyril before him. When he got to the palace, however, he found a big gathering of Arabs and Mohammedan teachers as well as the two Sultans, who in their presence proceeded to question and

test him. The delightful thing about Cyril is his simplicity, and he was quite simple on this occasion. He said that they were very clever and that he was very ignorant, especially as he had then been only two years a Christian, and that there were some things that he could not answer. They pressed him to say what had persuaded him of the truth of Christianity, and his answer was rather interesting. He said that even the Koran acknowledged our Lord to have been born of a Virgin, and from this he had come to believe Him divine. Then the Sultan asked him if he would go back to his birthplace, and he answered as bravely as his namesake at his question, 'Yes, if you order me, for you are my Sultan; but in matters of my soul, I have another King now.'

At home his father proved unexpectedly tolerant; and when an old family friend came to beg him to return to the mosque, promising to allow his reception to be private and quiet, Cyril, with extreme wisdom, contented himself with thanking the old man for his trouble and for the interest that he took in his welfare. But he did not go. Instead, he used to get up every morning when his people went to the mosque for prayers, and spend that time with

his Bible. He is married now and back in the island, daily teaching in the plantations of the things he has found.

There are moments, in the crowded Indian bazaar or outside a mosque resonant with misdirected prayer, when one is tempted to question the good of Mission work. The thought chills the heart that perhaps the West has controlled Christian thought for so long that we have lost the key to the Eastern mind. And then one remembers the Chapel of the Thorns; how short a time we have been at work; how small a band even a Paul left behind him in great heathen cities; and how, since 'Magnificat' proclaimed the fact, it has been His plan to look upon 'low estate' and to do with such 'great things.' One Cyril, and Missions are worth while. There are not in Islam wiser than there were in Athens, nor in Africa fiercer than Clovis or Guthran; and the doom is on them and their kings.

X

A VILLAGE STREET

A CHARMING road of a few miles takes one out to the village. All the way hedgeless Africa riots in beauty of colour and scent and form, here where the grey-green casuarinas tower up in soft lights to meet high overhead, there where the twisted cocoa-nuts rise to their rich coronas above the brake of banana and scrub. A huge mango marks the turn of the road. Every morning the country folks set down their burdens against its spreading roots, and exchange the news of the day in the bushy shade. You can see the vivid yellow of piled plantains, the orange and gold of mangoes and oranges, and the scarlet of a hairy kind of fruit which grows in clusters on a black wood. Beyond the mango is a slight plain where coral rock outcrops, and African furze and a species of bracken luxuriate. And then there is the sentry-box and red flag, with living hut behind, of the *askari* stationed in these

A GOVERNMENT ROAD

parts, and we swing round, nearly at a right angle, into the village street.

It is a Christian village and it is a Western road, but it is Africa for all that. There are no pavements, nor curbs, nor gutters, nor garden gates, nor tamed flowers in proper beds, nor street lamps, nor shops, and the only traffic is the occasional carriage or car of some visitor to the Convent, or a usually belated *padre* marking time on a bicycle. There is first, however, the village well, which is rather more fascinating than most wells, for in addition to its cool mossy depth with the black water inviting far below, it has a rough stone-hewn background to carry an iron bar, across which runs the primitive fibre rope to which each native woman ties her own calabash or bucket. Besides, a tall cocoa-nut palm behind shelters a colony of chattering yellow birds as pretty as canaries and as cheerful as London sparrows. I am glad the good God made some birds only capable of 'a joyful noise'; one feels less lonely.

Mama-John lives close by, for you always name the woman after her child (only it is not John!). He is the nicest black imp imaginable, with a *muhoga*[1]-distended stomach, which only

[1] Cassava.

adds to his beauty in the bath. That operation usually takes place in the street as one rides back from the service in the early morning, for an African does most things outside his hut. If you ride in when the sun has sunk behind the sea an hour or so, red fires leap and crackle outside most of the houses, and cooking scents the streets. On *papa*[1] days a self-respecting fried-fish shop at home would put up shutters for very shame at so ignominious a beating.

This habit of living out of doors stamps a character on every hut. The house itself is merely a square stick-and-mud erection, with a widespreading thatch of cocoa-nut leaves, and it is often chimney and windowless. Within there is a division into cubicles, as we might say, and that farthest from the low door is always rather more than dark. But outside a mud seat runs round under the eaves, and in one corner will be the hollowed log and strong stick-pestle for pounding grain. A clean-swept space before the doorway is often spread with mats, on which the white, pithy, *muhoga* roots dry in the sun; and there is the blackened spot on which the fire is usually built, with half a

[1] Shark.

dozen native stools strewn around. A kind of miniature hut, with roof but no sides, stands, generally, a few yards away, and here the wandering goats of the owner's banking account are tied at night. A banana brake sets a delicious greenish-yellow patch somewhere near, graceful always, but the more so, perhaps, when the dark red flower on the long stalk bends out of the heart of the coiled fibrous branches.

Houses such as these keep the way till we reach cross-roads. To the left a dwindling track runs through an enchanted country, sometimes scarlet with lilies, but ever green as the meads of God. To the right, after the roofed but open market with the hard-beaten earth floor, is a line of houses facing the church, in which the elders of the village live. Most of these knew the slave-chains in their day, and they look across to the cross-set churchyard, where fragrant white-blossomed fleshy-stemmed frangipanni drop petals and leaves each year upon slave-graves. The church itself lifts a high tower over the crouching hamlet as the churches must have done in England in the days of Anselm and Becket. Inside, the narrow unglazed windows admit cooled air and little light, and chattering Java sparrows in the high

clerestory windows tell again that the place of the altar of my King and God is one where the sparrow hath found her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young. Now and again a big whirring beetle or a deep-humming mason-wasp sails through the still sanctuary as one kneels, and seems to call to the stir of human life beyond. For even in a village which seems on most days asleep beneath a blazing sun, there is no heart not astir and purposeful.

If we leave the church by the western gate, and take that path to the village, we find activities enough. The younger men set out in the early morning for Government service in town, or for their work under the auspices of the Mission, but here is a row of native women, armed with the rough hoe of common use, hard at the dressing of a patch of pine-apples. Each stands behind her neighbour in a long line aslant the clearing, one tight-wound cloth gathered to the knees, the other worn free of the arms and shoulders. To be honest, one must confess that they are more picturesque than beautiful, and it is entirely necessary to rearrange one's cloth, or discuss the overseer, or settle who disturbed the village late last

night, several times each hour. In the afternoon they pick up wood for the evening fire, or get ready house and cooking pot against the return of the master.

The path joins the main street not far from the village school where the available boys are being instructed, not without a good supply of noise, in the usual mysteries. It is beyond me how anybody learns anything when the woods cry through the open door each second of the day and the cool sea is but a few hundred yards away. Our way lies thither. The trees do not thin, for they crowd to the very edge of the low cliffs. A kapok swings its cotton pods among bare branches by a gaunt old baobab on our left as we go, and the cocoa-nuts cluster again where two gate-posts of coral stone and an ever-open gate are all that our commonwealth finds necessary by way of an entrance or enclosure to the sisters' house and school and chapel just beyond. Through the gates, indeed, the road ceases in a wide space flanked by a low thatched building on the right (whose open cross above the door reminds that this was the first slave-church), and an old well and a wee hospital on the left. Before, in the centre, is the ancient mango whose thick leaves hide the

bell by which the world hereabouts sets its time. There will be girls, as likely as not, scattered round, and you will wish (as likely as not !) that they did not wear garments which are neither African nor English, and more useful than picturesque. But they discard them in the sea, and these bushes veil the shore. I wish I were brown and lithe, and that I might live as free, where wavelets ripple in for ever on the coral sands in the sun !

XI

WITH OPENED EYES

The church bell has been calling with its quaintly harsh note for half an hour, and the brown folk have nearly filled the ungainly stone building, narrow-windowed and dark, but imposing among the thatch and daub of the village houses. It is early enough to be pleasantly cool; but already the sun is ablaze among the infinite green of the woods. In the vestry the queer little procession is mustering, small to-day, for there is no festival. Two red-cassocked boys are busy with the brazier and charcoal: the censer lies beside them; two others, the priest's servers, are vesting with a complete disregard of the 'accidents' of cottas; and in the inner room the priest himself is robing. He was a slave-boy fifty years ago, and time is already marking him, for the African ages rapidly, but he is very mindful of the dignity of his office. It is with an undeniable air that he folds the chasuble, assumes

it, puts a fold straight here and there, and then nods to the bell-ringer—close by him in the confined space—to cease the ringing. She is a woman who could not pretend to beauty as her nose has succumbed to the vicissitudes of life, but there is strength in her arms anyway. We fall in, the 'reader' takes his place, and they begin the introit as we enter the sanctuary.

The church is quite full, and there are only a few European sisters among the Africans. The women on their side are dressed in native fashion, one *shiti* wound round the body from breast to knee and another thrown over the shoulders. They are of any colour and pattern, but the handkerchief on the head is usually scarlet. But if they are barbaric the men are worse, for they have left native dress to some extent, and you can pick out white trousers and shirts here and there, and the mixture is not pleasing. There is no organ or choir, but the singing is as hearty as any man could wish, with perhaps a little interest thrown in! A very low stone screen separates the chancel from the nave, and the sense of space is grateful within it. Through the narrow windows one sees the little churchyard, hot and rich in the sun, alive with the hum of insects, dotted with the neat uniform

crosses of the slave-people who have gone. '*I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come*,' we chant.

Missionaries are not unjustly accused in some quarters of an excess of sentiment where their people are concerned, and it is easy to drop into it. But we are not always so! To-day, for instance, I was merely irritated by the service. My own Offering had been made earlier, and I was there, as a visitor, to serve the chalice only, and I was used to the appearance of things. Only the weakness impressed me. The boys were grossly careless in the sanctuary; and instead of behaving as you expect English boys with fifteen centuries of Christianity behind them to behave, they behaved precisely like Africans whose fathers were dragged here in chains and whose homes are wattle huts. It was most annoying. There was a new thurifer, too, and he missed the 'Sanctus' altogether, and strayed in during the Consecration, halfway through the prayer, with a complete indifference. Besides, the usual precentor was away, and we got far too high for the congregation because we depended on the sisters; while the priest irritated me, first because he tried to monotone the collects and merely murdered

them, and secondly, because he broke the order by saying the 'Sursum Corda' instead of trying to sing it. Two girls chattered in front like English children, one showing another an absurd ornament she was wearing. And there were other things; I even made up my mind to speak to the Bishop.

The bell rang at the priest's Communion, and I genuflected and went to the altar. The people flocked up desultorily, and (Miserere mei, Deus) there was even a repulsion at that moment. Most of the old people have been slaves, and they are still fearful of kneeling before the congregation near a white man. I thought that it was jealousy for the Lord God of Hosts that made me angry with their carelessness; I would, if I could, have checked their hasty signing, the clumsy sip, the shrinking so inartistically back, and the rapid departure, in one case before I had finished my administrating sentence. I even caught two servers whispering together while they pretended to sing the Communion hymn, and my attention wavered from that which I held to look at them. And I suppose that I did well to regret these things, for it was not all as it should be.

But then God opened my eyes. I am relating a real experience, and I am risking the charge of sentimentality precisely because of its reality. There is no doubt that everything was normal and commonplace in the church, and it is entirely reasonable to say that this kind of thinking is foolishness. But God opened my eyes. There came up nearly last of all an old woman, white-headed, raggedly dressed, ugly, and lame. She limped noisily by means of a rough stick torn from the brake and bigger than herself. Her own length from the place of communion she let this fall on the stones, and threw herself forward on her hands and knees. Half crouching there she turned her mouth up to the chalice, and drank as repulsively as the rest. But I had seen.

Back in the chancel one can hide one's face, and I did so. I am not ashamed. I would give years of life to be able to tell the knowledge that came to me then, but it cannot be done. Only in a moment I knew the infinite love of God; I saw how that rude church was bathed in the radiance of it; how the heart of our Saviour was bared and throbbing in our midst, and how His hands and arms were round these faulty sheep. It was their weak-

ness that He loved. It was their harsh, frightened, rude devotion that He was pouring His Blood to win. And more: He Himself, in the person of these brown folk, dropped His stick on the pavement, and fell to kneel at *my* feet. And I had criticised; I had listened in my heart to the mad folly of those who ask if our converts are successful; I had set a standard of devotion, and that my own! It cannot be told in words, but I wept as I knelt. The tears came, however, not because I was sorry, nor because I had been dull; not even women's tears come for that. I wept because I felt the beatings of the heart of God, and because I was scorched and torn by the passion of His love.

We stood up for the 'Gloria in excelsis Deo,' but I could not sing it. The angels were singing it about me, and one cannot sing with them; I pray His Mother, who has wept, will present what I had to bring instead. We knelt for the blessing, and the peace of God came as a strong man armed to keep His house. We stood while they washed the marks of sacrifice on earth away; but God was showing me where fingers can be put still into the print of the nails and hands thrust still into His side. And

we passed out into the sun, the brown children scattering for home who did not know that they were glorified. I stumbled away down the little stony road where lizards dart across the path and birds sing high in the casuarina trees, and as I went I knew where I had been. What matters it that these, His sheep, are so harsh and rude and poor? The Blood of God has stained their lips, and Hands sealed with the promise of eternal keeping shield them round; and they kneel in the Gate of Heaven, which shall not be shut again, for the honour of God, while He tabernacles among men.

XII

SILVESTER

I REMEMBER that I saw the old man first at the altar of his village church. My own service in another chapel was over, and I new to the place, so that I had strolled down the path from the clergy-house under the wind-tossed casuarinas to meet my friend, the English priest, at the conclusion of the village devotions. As it chanced, old Silvester was celebrating. He stood at the altar facing the people with the big book in his hand, glancing now at it and now at the people over the rim of his big spectacles. His woolly thatch is grey and his face seamed somewhat; he was bare-foot, according to custom, in an old chasuble which would be abandoned, I take it, if the Mission could afford a new one; and below an alb considerably too short for him, as well as at the wrists, peeped out the native under-garment, rather suggestive below of a red-and-white petticoat. His voice rang clear and strong, however, and there was

a touch of dignity about him. He bent himself at the Elevation and his own Communion with a freedom of devotion very African and wholly spontaneous, and at the end he was liberal in his blessing.

We met at breakfast, for on these days he breakfasts at the clergy-house and I sit opposite him. The old face—old, that is, for an African—is an expressive one, shrewd, I thought, and perhaps a little hard. That is an impression difficult to account for, but it is undoubtedly there despite his geniality and friendliness. His English is beyond praise, but he prefers the native, and invariably answers English questions in that tongue if he can. In the native he gesticulates like one of his own old folks on the *shamba*, but he freezes a little when his tongue sets itself to the framing of our words. He is short and thick-set, but active enough. I noticed no more at table than that he appeared rather to eat bacon with his mustard than mustard with his bacon!

Since that day we have grown to know one another; and, for my part, it is a real pleasure to look at him across the table, to hear his talk, and to realise all that he stands for in the life of the Church to-day. To begin with,

to company with him is like being transported to the times of the dawn of the Faith in our own England. He has moved among great persons, bishops of apostolic memory, confessors of simple faith; he has come out of an age as rude as that of Alban or Augustine; he has seen men adore that which they had burned, and burn that which they had adored. At six he was bundled out of a slave-dhow into the open market of the city, and he watched, with panic fear, the giving of his batch of slave-boys to the dread white man by the Sultan. He was baptized by Tozer; he was taught by Steere; he was ordained by Smythies; by men, that is, apostolic in their day, whose mantling by the Spirit we look back upon with awe. He saw the hideous horrors of that market where now the Cathedral stands—the Cathedral which he saw built, in which he was the first African to be admitted to the priesthood, and whose soil he watched consecrated by the body of its founder. He heard when men, racked with fever, told of the flickering flame at Magila and beyond; he himself ministered alone in a village with marauding tribes at its gates; and he was with Bishop Smythies when Hannington of Uganda came up to meet the older man, and

went on trail at last, though little knowing, to the darkness of that loathsome hut on the edge of his diocese and to the spears at dawn. He has been to England, and was the guest of Benson and of Temple. His life is coincident with the birth of an East African Church, whose story, permeated with an immortal Gospel, is immortal too. And he is still the African in dress and manner, content among the huts of his people.

This, then, is what the least ghost of a historical imagination seizes upon as it regards him; but, as a matter of fact, Silvester is no paragon. He is not old enough to be as little busy as he is, and he has most of the African faults in his character as well. Despite the years of good labour, grave sins have marred his work, bringing with them months of sorrow to more than himself. That is past now, but one always wishes that he trained his servers, that he prepared his sermons, and that he forgave his enemies! He was incredulous when the Balkan allies spared thousands of Turkish prisoners, for he himself has been under the heel of Islam. I saw him flame with anger when he learned that the son of Bishop Hannington had baptized the son of

his father's murderer, and his illogical attitude to certain Church questions is as annoying as his incredible Conservatism! And there is more, too. It comes to one very sadly at times that there seems so often to be in so many Africans a lack of that spirit of consecration which is the soul of religion, and even a tendency to forget that Christianity is devotion to a Person more than the acceptance of an ethic.

In a word, Silvester is an admirable illustration of the faults of the native Church; and that is precisely why I want to write about him. He seems to me to be the conclusive answer to those objectors to the missionary campaign who profess to find in him and such as him their strongest argument. What strikes one first is the enormous difference between what this man is in his age and what he would have been without Christ. Of course, as a matter of fact, he would probably have found before this that early African grave of vice and lust; or else, a doddering old scandal-monger, he would be crouching round some village fire and lending the influence of his grey hairs to the pollution of the village youth in the tribal ceremonies. The contrast is beyond words. He is one who might have

remained sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, and upon whom the Light has shined.

But it is not here that I find the most striking consideration, rather it lies in the fact that gathered into this man's life are all those factors which have conquered and are conquering the primal brute instincts of man and the degradation of his sinful will. Consider Silvester's children. They have not been dragged up from the slave-market; instead their lives have been strengthened by that environment which for so many years has been about their father. Heathen children are cursed from the start; these are free to run. The heathen are bogged hopelessly in a state to which everything that ennobles has no access; his are placed in the broad uplands of life, swept clean by the winds of the Spirit, and lit by the cheer of the sun. You can see what effect it has had as you look at them; and one thinks of their children's children.

And the old man has even some grip of the Gospel which we have not got, whatever may be said for it. When he was told at table by another of the differences in faith and practice existent in a neighbouring Mission, he refused to see their significance. 'When you

white men have gone,' he said, ' we shall agree. You argue and talk and we have to listen, but when you have gone we shall remember that for all of us it is the same, *the darkness out of which we came and the light in which we are.*'

XIII

WHEN TROPIC SEAS ARE OUT

When the sea goes down it leaves a stretch of wonderland before the clergy-house. Two miles out is the greater coral reef, and a little more than a mile nearer in than that are the sand-banks and coral ridges of, as it were, the mainland. This last mile is, at high water, a shallow stretch of scarcely varying depth from which the tide can drain away with wonderful rapidity. Once down, the yellow sands are broken now by great pools of water, now by stretches of green and brown weed, now by projecting saws of coral rock, and in one place by an immense mangrove 'swamp.' The deep water beyond is edged by white banks of coral sand, upon which the great sea-birds strut until the narrow outrigger canoes of the fishermen send them screaming out to sea. The sun bathes it by day and seams the wide sea beyond with shades of colour which add to the glories of the shore. And by night the white moon

floods a path of glory right across it, and the stars are caught in the face of the shallows. It is a real wonderland.

I had often looked at it (and, to tell the truth, written about it) before I had leisure to explore it, but the other day time and place 'made themselves,' as Lady Macbeth puts it. The tide was far out by eight o'clock, and cumulus clouds, flanked by skirmishers of cirrus, suggested that it would not be so hot for a couple of hours as it sometimes is. So I put on a worn coat, rolled up my trousers, slung a camera over my shoulders, pushed a pair of old slippers into my pockets (for the patches of coral rock are like the inside of the barrel of Regulus!), and set a big sun-helmet on the back of my head. Then I took a stick and set out.

It is going to be impossible to tell of all that kept the way to the final enchantment of those white sand-banks I had set out to quest. Besides, I do not know the names of half the things I saw, and I cannot tell you anything scientific, so perhaps a full account would not be worth the while. But if you want to step into a land of living Grimm—positively to see mermaids' caverns and fairy fish—I am your

man! That is the best of not being scientific. If I had been, I suppose I should have caught and stuffed the fish, dried the weeds, boiled the shell-fish for their shells, and reduced the eternal realities of wonderland to the transient unrealities of science. Because, as a matter of fact, when every scientific treatise has gone the way of the *Bestiaire Divin* and the *Herbal of Avicenna*, tropic seas will still leave on African sands the inexplicable marvels of the least of these.

For the wonder of them is, indeed, the wonder of another world. First a great sheet of warm water barred my way. I stepped down into it and peered. Some feet of clear water lay between the edge of sand and the beginning of a great forest of weed, and in that channel a world of creatures was at work. There were dozens of sea-urchins to begin with, but sea-urchins more fearfully and wonderfully made than any that I have ever seen at home. Imagine a small black ball, flat underneath where is the busy grumbling mouth of the creature (ever hard at work seeking food), and then set upon it a hundred long thin black spines, brittle if I tried to break them, but strong enough to ward off heavy weights when

I dropped shell-fish upon them through the water. The spines were at least six or seven inches long, and all of them busily moving about, fending off fish, and helping their owners along. Right in the centre of the spines was a yellow blob of jelly with a red centre and, set about it at regular distances, a pentagon of white spots for all the world like five white-headed pins which a child had buried to the head in a big pincushion. The yellow jelly *may* have been an eye; *I* don't know; anyway it looked like it; and there were your monsters all complete. I stood and looked at them in utter amazement until I saw a more wonderful thing still. Every now and then a glint of the most vivid fairy blue imaginable showed from underneath an overhanging ledge of stone. Presently it stayed long enough for me to see that it was a wee head, very wise-looking and very busy. Then in a moment a blue flash shot to the edge of the weed forest and returned more slowly, I suppose with food. I saw now the whole fish. He was perhaps an inch long, perhaps not as much, silver except for two bold bars of azure which met on his head and ended on his sides in two great circles with scarlet hearts. While I looked I saw

more, and once one found refuge under the curve of my foot as I stood in the water.

Down the channel came sailing a squadron of heavy grey-brown fish with big eyes. They jostled the urchins out of the way, and drove the sky-blues into the caverns of the stones or the depths of the forest. They were so solemn and big that I dived with my stick at the leader —and they fled in grey arrows to the deeps ahead.

I landed to follow, and then saw my first sea-slug. He is one of those beasts which leave you marvelling at the inscrutable Will of God. One almost dares to ask how such things came to be. Picture a bloated mass of podgy jelly substance, with a skin, though, too hard to be pierced at all easily even with a heavy stick. About three-quarters of him is covered with innumerable feet like those of a star-fish, but they all move so slowly and are so relatively small that you do not see them at first. These make up his underneath and sides, but there seems no other way of telling which is his back or which his front, for he is destitute of figure! He did not appear to have a head, and I had no idea which end was his tail until, stirred into action, his billion legs began to work, and

he moved blindly into sand and weed for whatever it is the good God has taught him to look. There he will lie until the seas come in, or until a boy with a sharp stick, seeking his like, transfixes him, and carries him, with fifty of his brethren thus impaled, to the market. Sometimes he is black, but sometimes tabby like a cat—if you can imagine tabbiness without fur! I left the whole twelve inches of his grossness lying on the shore, and went on.

It was in a place of many waters that lay on the far side of some hundred yards of shingle that I waited next. Three big streams from pools farther up the beach poured in cataracts over the edge of the shingle-bed and made one river to the sea. The waters raced past like a Scottish river in miniature; and the very trout were there, no other than my grey-coated friends, ensconced behind likely eddies, nose to the stream, awaiting what might come. But I left them in order to watch the crabs. There must have been half a dozen different kinds at work in the rush of water, devouring the food which the streams brought down, or one another in the intervals of waiting. One enormous fellow with a crimson back, yellow sides, and huge blue eyes set on the end of brown towers

which stuck far out before him, had no rival. He put up a fight with a transparent sand-crab whose principal nipper is enormously developed so that he may burrow in the sand, but the red knight won in a couple of rounds and tore his foe up before my eyes. He left the carcass for better prey, and a host of wee green brethren, with a scuttling power beyond all praise, cleared up the feast. I do not know how long I watched—until, I think, the rivers began to dry at their source, and I went off, still after my grey fish, to the sea. The way lay for me across a wet field of sand and coral stones covered with the slush of sea-weed ; and it was hard going. Once or twice the yielding sands sank me to the knee, but I had no fear of this until I almost trod on a strange creature that very nearly paralyses description. He was a big worm, perhaps four feet in length, but without even a worm's agility or speed. He lay across the wrack, and I thought him dead until I stirred him with a stick. He was coppery-red and grey, and if you lifted him by the middle on the stick, all the watery substance of him ran down into a bulge on either side like a stopped india-rubber tube half filled with water. I thought him a monstrosity like the

slug until he woke up into life. Then one end of him frayed out into a cluster of delicate tender fronds resembling the curled and sensitive leaves of a young fern, but waving about as the fleshy arms of the sea-anemone do. These, a blushing pink, worked nervously among the slither and forced a way for the helpless body out of sight. There were many more here and there, but although I expect it was foolish, I rather feared the creature and left the others. His head was a miracle of grace, his body the dream of a nightmare. You felt about him exactly as you feel about some people of peculiar bodily grace and hideous spiritual deformity. Of course, that is being hard on the poor serpent-worm, who was such a poor attempt at either a serpent or a worm. But I cannot help it, he reminded me of devils. After all, he had this in common even with Lucifer, that he began very well and ended very badly.

This field of horrors led to another stream of clear water, and I followed it to the sea. Then I skirted the edge, ever trending out, until the wavelets gave back at last upon the coral sands of my search.

I had not the least thought that it would be

half as beautiful as it was. The sea was pearl-grey except where the ripples rolled in, in blue rolls of water too quiet even to break on the sands. Before, the clear sun danced on a limitless sea; behind, the wastes over which I had come seemed very wide. Far away, at the head of the promontory, green with waving cocoa-nut palms, the white and red of the town pushed out into the distant blue, a dream-city seemingly, very fair. The great bowl of the sky leaned over all, not burning yet but just a promise, in its infinite vast remoteness, of eternal life. Sea-birds strutted, as I had guessed, all unconcerned; and it was very still. One understood a little 'What Time in mists confounds,' and how sometimes

> 'Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
> Round the half-glimpséd turrets slowly wash again.'

I watched till the fisher-folk came with their nets, and the skirmishers of a small army of brown women, scantily girt in a single cloth, invaded my sands. Then I began to go.

But a hundred yards higher up the marge of the sea several long brown canoes, an outpost of the army, had come ashore. Most of them were outriggers, the clumsy rough timbers shearing through the water alongside the narrow

hollowed-out log of the main body of the boat, as the sailors drove it through. Two sorts of paddles they use, one spear-shaped and powerful, the other nothing more than a hollowed calabash fastened on the end of a pole, and used to make way by a kind of scooping process. One bigger craft had a queer triangular sail that bagged out in the wind, but now a native, yelling over his shoulder, was beginning to haul it down. It was evident enough what he was saying, for the rest of the boats, some ashore, some half afloat, were stretched in a wide circle, their owners busy over the side with the top hamper of a big net. As I watched, one and another leapt waist-deep into the sea. The sailed canoe ran sharply into a vacant corner, and its owners followed suit. Then began a scene of great animation while the odd dozen of fishers began to land the seine. The vehement captain of the big canoe directed operations, he himself a study worth a sketch, for he was blacker than the rest and more stalwart (not a Swahili, I imagine), and you could see the muscles of him rippling under the velvet skin of arms and thighs as he strained at his part. A few women, hitching up their cloths, splashed round the edge; and gradu-

ally the whole came ashore. It was wonderfully beautiful as the silver streaks gleamed and flashed in the sun, but as the water dried off the whole half-circle seemed turned to living silver. Mornings with the Brixham trawlers and memories of the hauls to be seen on Yarmouth beach came to mind now, but the fish themselves are so different! To us they seem more grotesque. Curiously bloated things are some; others yet more curiously sword-nosed and long-finned; while all are fantastically coloured as those may not be whose home lies on the dull sands of the North Sea. I was irresistibly reminded of a picture-book that has long since gone the way of most of the other companions of those days, in which I used, aged six or seven, to speculate on the queer faces of the fish that lay huddled on the shores of Galilee by the feet of the sons of Zebedee. The artist had more wit than I imagined in those days, because I remember, even now, my early scepticisms. How long ago it seems! Yet there is no kind of doubt that seines such as these were hauled here far longer than a span so short as twenty years ago. If the Master from Nazareth had walked these shores in His day He would have seen the same. He would have done here what He

did there too—as I must try, when I have skill.

The living coral can be found here, not white like the broken pieces that strew the distant beach, but a living pink. Each branched arm is itself a home of innumerable creatures, from minute crabs with pearl bodies and spidery green legs which dodge round the holes and knobs with wonderful speed, down to slender barnacles who spread feathery fans of tissue to trap invisible atoms if you leave them for a while in the water. Little sponges lodge in the tangle of weed and sand that collects in the hollows, and it is almost with the sensation of breaking a sentient creature that you snap an arm of the mass. I broke a piece and flung it out to sea, and with it went, I suppose, thousands of creatures—each one planned, each one known, each one approved. One stands dumb with the wonder of it.

My return lay through the mangrove swamp, which stretches towards the sea from the shore ; but a mangrove swamp, at any rate as we see them in East Africa, is not a swamp at all. It is a beautiful place of mystery. The sand gives suddenly, here and there, on coral rock, incredibly sharp, and rising in fantastic masses ten

or twelve feet high. Some of these are never covered by the tide, and they swarm with crabs and *lizards*. The combination is amazing, and one wonders what the beasts make of it themselves, for the crabs disappear below the water when the tide rises, and the lizards retreat before it to the summit. The crabs are little brown-green fellows, whose agility is only second to that of the slim steely lizards who run in and out of the knife blades and needle points so quickly that you can hardly see them go. I crept into one cavern, and the arching roof became alive with them after I had been still a moment. Sometimes the rising tide must imprison them here, and then the crabs come in! You can make a pretty nightmare of it if you try:—the dainty lizard in the bell of the roof with his retreat cut off; the rising water; the throbbing of imprisoned air space; the crabs pushing out of the water, masters at last. What horror!

The mangroves themselves are the strangest trees. One pictures them as great, rooty, noisome swamps where the sun never comes and unclean insects buzz and swarm; but whatever they are on the West Coast rivers, they are not so here. Instead, out of the

golden sand, these graceful green stems stand up straight, spreading into thick bushy trees whose blossoms in their season attract thousands of lively brown bees reminiscent of English meadows in the summer. But the queer thing about them is that their roots, spraying out geometrically like radii from the centre, push up short and brave in every direction, so that you pick your way through their stumpy hosts with a certain difficulty. Pools of salt water lie between, mostly crab-haunted, with a few small fish; but the combination of land and sea is a very strange one. I like it, though; one has that queer kind of feeling that anything might happen. The natives, indeed, think so, and fluttering rags on one tree by the sand-ridge which pushes out between us tell the tale. Maybe in the dark of the moon it is eerie enough; now I find it, in the sun, only one of the strange gardens where God might be supposed to walk. After all, when it was made, He looked on this too and found it good.

As I passed up to the shore I hit on a *kenge* so busy about his own affairs that he never noticed me. I crept to a sheltering trunk within six feet of him, and he neither saw nor heard. He was perhaps three feet long, small

for his kind, a heavy-looking, dull brown lizard with a white throat and a powerful tail pinked out in black. You would not have expected much agility from his fat trailing body, but as I watched he whisked here and there, raised himself high on his stumpy fore-feet, snapped right and left, and seemed to be all eyes like the beasts of the Apocalypse. A swarm of big-winged fly had hatched out in the sun, from eggs laid, as likely as not, among the dry sand of the forest fringe, and several score of them were fluttering aimlessly about on unaccustomed wings. My *kenge* got an odd dozen while I watched, though he was fairly heavily handicapped one would have thought. I expect the flies knew nothing till his cruel mouth snapped at them, which was, of course, the reason for his success; and thus I pitied the flies at last. The lizard seemed an evil beast as the light flashed iridescent on the jewelled wings of the aimless fluttering crowd. How incredible it is that this should be part of the Will of God; that this busy corner should be as present to Him as the hum of a distant city or the travail of some soul; that, yet more, He should be somehow immanent here! I drew my breath with awe, and dropped the little stone I had

picked up with which to do battle for the flies; instead, I crept away, and left God to attend to His own world.

The sea has covered the flats while I have been writing, and the blue flood is flecked with the white sails of the fisher-boats I watched but now stranded on the banks a thousand yards away. They speed away as the white souls sped past the Blessed Damozel who leans on the golden bar of heaven. And behind them the limitless irresistible sea covers the jewelled fish, the grey slow slug, the writhing sea-worm, and the teeming coral, like that love of God that is so much broader than the measures of man's mind.

XIV

THE GHOST-POOLS OF KOMBENI

THE sea was smooth as glass and pearl-grey in the morning light as I pulled my bicycle out at dawn, and the blue smoke hung over the huts of the village in the damp air. African mornings are never to be forgotten. Here a reasonable road runs straight out under the cocoa palms, and the huts cluster, each in its own setting of wide banana leaves and graceful cassava, all the way along it. There are, of course, no hedges, nor indeed fences of any description; flowering bushes and trees abound, and crotons of every hue show among the greens. As early as this people are astir. Women, in a single dark cloth wrapped tightly about them, are lighting fires, or returning with the water, or loosing the goats whose sound fills the air. You see a few babies a-sprawl on mats; the young rascals of boys are still asleep. But most of the men will set out for town, five miles away, in half an hour or so.

The road through the village strikes the main way to the south end of the island at an *askari* box, with the drooping scarlet flag of the Sultan's Government on a pole by the door and the native policeman himself, in smart khaki and a red tarbusch, rather sleepy on a bench beside it. He saluted cheerily and gave me a *Jambo* in return for mine; and then I saw my friend. We two had planned the excursion together, and I had put my life in his hands by leaving the arrangements to him. He is a young Goan, born in the Seychelles, a little dark, but vivacious and clever enough to hope enthusiastically for a medical course at Aberdeen when his brother returns from seven years' exile among its granite, mists, and snows. It is an amazing journey for him to take, and it shows the spirit of old Portugal in these, her rather decadent sons. He has no English friends those six thousand odd miles away, and little money, but he is prepared to adventure himself cheerfully enough. Given an English lad of the same provincial upbringing, and would he be willing to set out alone for seven years in Allahabad or Bombay? But then, of course, Britain is a promised land of gods and giants to this other.

We inspected one another. I was in white duck and laden with a camera and stand; he in a sporting grey flannel and brown boots, his bicycle hung round with the knobbly packages of our provisions—his own providing. I eyed them wistfully; it was a great adventure! Of the two of us he was, I think, to suffer most with regard to habiliments. It is true that my white duck was a sodden brownish-black mass when we returned, but duck is cheap and washable. He never wore his boots again, and personally I would have made no offer for his flannels. But we must admit that luck—or the ghosts—was against us.

This main road very soon gives up the effort at respectability with which it begins, and a healthy crop of weeds appeared among the stones between the two great ox-wagon ruts of the ordinary traffic. But its beauty made up for all deficiencies. Photography in the tropics is a hopeless business, for every few yards is a picture, and yet one despairs of selection. To-day, for instance, there was a continual panorama of beautiful corners. Here a great mango hung over the road, a dark rich green for all the bushy mass of it, the fruit at this season gleaming high up among its branches,

in pink and yellow; there scented cloves ran in vistas from the road towards the blue of the distant sea. We passed a village with a swarming market, its name, Kiembe-samaki, explaining that the big loads on most men's heads were piles of fish, and that the great stacks of fruit beneath the low roofs of cocoa plaiting were mangoes. Bananas, pine-apples, guavas, avocado pears, oranges, lemons, and many native fruits were there besides. And an unquestionable odour, which must surely be the world's triumph smell, testified that some one had bagged a shark very recently, and that his already deliciously high meat was the centre of attraction. We spun through and left the town behind in a turn of the road. Then some rain fell, but in a few minutes the sun was out again, and the world lit by that clear shining after rain, every twig jewelled, every flower freshly fragrant, as when God walked in the dawn of the world and found it very good.

At the eleventh mile-stone we took to a plantation path which ran off at right angles on our left. It was one of those innumerable ways, just wide enough for one traveller, which score Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. Here it is like walking through an

enormous hot-house with every kind of tropical plant rioting to the edge of the path. I lost my sense of direction in five minutes, and Christopher was a genius to remember the turnings, since the track forked at every few hundred yards. It was as varied as possible, but the same kind of variation is repeated again and again, though with change enough to prevent one's being wearied, but certain to puzzle any unfortunate short of a Livingstone or the 'Silver Wolf' of the Boy Scouts! For instance, at one moment we were lost in a banana brake, the rich red blossom of each tree pushing its fleshy tongue out of the clustering heart of the fan-like leaves, with a trail of fruit on the stalk behind it. The yellow fibrous stems are very lovely against the dark of the undergrowth beneath them; but each brake is confusingly like its fellows. And the cocoa-nut palm plantations are worse. Here, like firs in a Scottish forest, the great slim trunks rise to the crown above them, where the brown nuts in their husks cluster at the head, and a peculiar kind of light green coarse cotton-grass spreads in a sheet beneath them. In a tangle of a score of different useful trees and bushes huts peep out every few minutes, but all bee-hives

look much alike, except, I suppose, to the bees which live in them.

But one must cut those three miles short. Presently we were running downhill at imminent risk of a broken neck, and at last our path was too stony for further riding. Here, however, a group of bigger huts proved to be inhabited by friends of Christopher, and a family party of women broke up to take our bicycles and bring us milky cocoa-nuts before we pushed on. I tried to snap a couple of maidens who, in primal nakedness, were splashing the water of their bath at one another, but a white man with a camera in these byways was too much for the twelve years that they mustered at most between them, and I was not quick enough. A tall woman with rich brown shoulders and arms that set off a splendid Arab necklace of amber beads, dressed in a *shiti* of brick-red and yellow, proved hostess, but the *Bwana mkubwa* of the homestead was away. As the sun was climbing high by now we did not stop, but plunged into the small devious track of our next stage.

In a quarter of a mile the country completely changed. It was hard going over a coral outcrop which cut one's boots to pieces,

and the trees died away to a low scrub abounding in a small yellow flower which attracted the bees. Here there was no shelter, and only a wind, which proved in the end our undoing, made the glare of the sun tolerable. The birds had disappeared, but huge land-crabs abounded. These great brown creatures, with enormous front claws of scarlet and eyes on towers that surveyed the world at an undue advantage, reared themselves up against us instead of running away. We were more or less tolerant of them until we came across a hairy monster feeding on the carcass of an equally large hermit land-crab, whose shell being broken had fallen an easy prey to his first cousin. Such unspeakable cannibalism raised our ire, and we fell on the victor, and left his corpse as a warning in the way. That evening as we returned the pair of them were one swarming ant-heap of minute black ants, so that out of the eater came forth meat. But such beasts are a queer horror. One remembers Mr. Wells's discovery in his Time-machine of that solitary beach on the edge of a dying world, where like monsters ravaged under a red ghost of the sun. I thought the more of it because, just then, a black shadow plunged

our scrub into gloom, and we turned to see dense black clouds that the wind had driven upon us unexpectedly. We hurried forward over the uneven ground, very conscious of our camera and our food and of the absence of all cover. The big drops began to fall as we plunged down again, through a fringe of fern now, to the sea. And as we descended upon the beach, from far back in the woods came the sound of driving rain.

There was no time to lose if we wanted shelter. The sea lay far out, and to right and left, above high-water mark, ran a great bank of some aromatic white-flowered shrub, of the aloe tribe I think, which afforded no shelter at all. Then, out of the wet sand, pushed a great fringe of mangrove swamp, bright green bushy trees (but too small to be of use), with extending roots of sharp-pointed spikes. But to our right the rocky arm of the headland ran out to sea, and we made for it. It proved to be a high coral ridge with points of needle sharpness, but with a base which curved in some few feet. We ran on, scanning it. Behind us the tropical storm was visibly sweeping down out of the hill, and its forerunners had already reached us. But Christopher caught sight of

a deepish part of the recess; we pushed in camera and food; then, lying flat on the ground, we rolled in ourselves. In a few seconds one great falling sheet of water hid the landscape, but it drained away from us, and except for the damp air we were moderately dry. For an hour we were held prisoners, and by the end of it were reasonably wet. But at last the downpour ceased, and we were able to scramble out. Then I saw that it was almost worth the delay. Great white herons were stalking on the wet sands; snipe literally covered the low mangrove trees; and small canary-yellow birds, with a flock of green-and-red parakeets and a host of weaver-birds, were praising the God of the storm.

We wrung out our coats and turned our backs on the shore by way of a small path, now a torrent, which reached the beach by the side of the coral ridge. A hundred yards within the bush we reached a homestead, where again my companion was known; and this time a polite Arab made us welcome, and finally called an old native from the depths of a hut to bear our food and be our guide. That was not, however, until he had done his best to persuade

us not to go. And Juma, the guide, seemed equally unwilling.

For fully an hour we passed through the same kind of scrub by which we had come, only now we were continually ankle-deep in water. Our provisions, hung round the person of Juma, bobbed on in front; I, busy with my camera and a dry handkerchief, followed Christopher. But in a little the conduct of the guide showed us we had reached the place. He had stopped before a rather thicker clump of bush, and was energetically crying 'Hodi! Hodi!'[1] before pushing the branches back and descending a steep path. We followed, and in a minute stood within the first of the caves. Juma remained, looking most unhappy, at its entrance, for although no spirit voice had answered his 'Hodi,' this, he maintained, was undoubtedly a place of *Sheitani*. For my part, I thought the second of the two caves, some hundred yards from the first, the more eerie, but both are sufficiently alike to allow of but one description. In the case of the second, then, which we visited alone immediately after seeing the first, an enormous cliff, caused by

[1] 'Hodi!' the usual native 'May I come in?' but often similarly answered.

THE DEVIL POOL

what must have been a land-slide, sloped inward to a great pool of water. One reached it down a slope thick with rich vegetation, through which the gleam of steely water in the distance shone cleanly. But this ceased at last as the rock surface was reached, and there was still a descent of some few yards to the water. A gaunt bare-boled tree rose toweringly on the edge of the green, and thick tropical creepers hung down like brown ropes. The cliff sloped away overhead, obscuring the light, and at its base lay the water, a pool perhaps forty feet long and a plunge broad. It was very very deep, rapidly shelving, and there was something sinister, I will confess, about its green-and-blue transparency. Far down against the base of the cliff was a large black opening, but no ripple ruffled the surface. For all that, as we listened, a peculiar sucking sound, as of giant lips, disturbed a silence only broken by the dripping of the late rains outside, for no living bird or beast seemed near. Christopher was clearly disinclined to stay, but I persuaded him to bathe with me. He would not dive, however, and I confess that plunging in that pool was one of the most uncanny experiences. It was natural enough, but one fought with

one's fears, and at last determined on a deep dive towards the black hole. The green water shot by, and objects on the bottom loomed up big and strange. Suddenly the water grew freezingly cold, and as my dive spent itself I seemed to be poised, very far from the bottom, over a cavernous infinity black and chill. In a kind of panic I turned and struck up towards the light, but in turning saw on a near slope by the edge a cheap piece of native pottery. I swam under the water to it, to rescue a perfect incense pot from a mass of broken sherds around it. It was fire-stained, and had been recently used. We brought it back to Juma who had waited outside the first cave, and his fear confirmed my value of it! He would not touch it, nor sit with us till we had placed it far off him. I brought it home with enormous care on my bicycle, an object of panic in all our resting places, but after surviving miles of shrub and *shamba* and bad roads the *Sheitan* was too strong for me, and it fell as I turned in at our garden gate. That at least is one explanation, though I heard another and a prettier one. But I have the fragments anyway.

Well, we returned to our first cave, which was a lesser affair altogether, and had a gentle

dry slope to an only moderately deep pool of delicious water. Here Juma was constrained to make a fire by the sight of our food and a promise that he should share it. And his methods were amazing. Practically everything was damp; but he seemed utterly indifferent to smoke, and absolutely leather-lunged. At last a broken cocoa-nut shell got going, and spluttered finely from the oil that is in them, and in a few minutes we were roasting before an enormous blaze while the rain began again outside. It was time now to investigate Christopher's idea of provisions. First he tumbled out about a dozen small Indian loaves, of which one satisfied me. Then he produced two tins of beef-steak pudding, for which we had one spoon and one pocket-knife. Sardines we fished out of their box by the tail, taking them whole. Pears we ate with our fingers, and really the centre cavity must have been designed for some such spoonless arrangement. But finally a tin of green peas rather beat us. They seemed raw, and were rather trying cold. However, Juma came to the rescue, and we put the whole tin on the fire as it was, with the lid raised a little. It is distinctly remarkable, I think, that all three of us are still alive.

We made a queer group round that fire, and a photo would have been priceless. Juma, in a torn blanket, sat crouched up in one corner, putting away the loaves in a fascinating and incomprehensible way; Christopher, plastered with sand and mud, but rather in his element, sat on a rock with his face to the ghost-pool and a tin of beef-steak pudding on his knees; I, with indescribable clothes, sucked a pipe at full length opposite, and watched Juma finish my pudding. We tried to make the latter tell us of the *Sheitan*, but he was singularly dull. It appeared that several individuals, when seized with 'possession' in the villages around, had rushed to this pool to talk to the spirit, and that undoubtedly you got rain if you prayed and burned incense here. Juma who, like his neighbours, is a pious Mohammedan, interlarded this departure from Islam with sundry repetitions of the Prophet's name, and he extended his tolerant modernism far enough to be interested while I told him how Christ had cast out devils. But the whole subject was obviously out of place with *Sheitani* listening round the corner.

So we rose to go, to find sunlight outside and the song of birds. In the bay of the white

THE CLIFF OF A CORAL ISLAND

herons the tide was at its lowest, and we roamed on to a vast mangrove swamp intermixed with sharp coral flats where edible crabs abounded, and through which a slow river crept to the sea. But we waded it, and round the corner was a beach which might have been that upon which Robinson Crusoe first saw Friday's foot-step. It lay ablaze in the hot sun. Great coral rocks rose sharply here and there out of the fine white sand, a sea absolutely trans-parent rippled on the shore, and solitary palms stood out here and there in lonely might against the sky-line. One hardly dared to tread the unruffled sand. Sea-birds sailing on wide wings down the air screamed a welcome, how-ever, and we lazed an hour in the shade.

Our way back lay up from that beach, and we were made welcome at a collection of huts there with real warmth. Our host was an old Arab, whose Benjamin was a bright youth whom I photographed outside his father's hen-house, a little miniature hut set on the top of a ladder to keep out marauders. Under a giant bread-fruit tree with a delicious shade they placed stools, and then came a succession of *dafu* (cocoa-nuts in the milky stage), bananas, and mangoes. We pulled out what bread

Juma had left us, and Christopher, with admirable nonchalance, produced two pots of preserved meat paste, so that we made the second meal of the day in high state. The ladies of the establishment came out to see, but they would come no nearer than a huge pile of cocoanut husk which two men with glistening skins and loin-cloths had been collecting. At last the dying sun warned us to be gone, the more as it set angrily in a bank of clouds. We rode out to the rough paths and the land-crabs in growing dusk and a presentiment!

Three miles away the rain began, and we were drenched in as many minutes. How I kept my camera dry and my incense pot unbroken I do not know, but I did somehow. We ploughed up small ascents through mud and a miniature torrent in much the same spirit as Hannibal crossed the Alps; but on the road it cleared.

Then began the chapter of possible accidents just avoided. A palm branch crashed down just before us, in the way they have, three miles out of town, and the nearness of it brought Christopher off his bicycle. A little farther on, the road was blocked by a fallen tree, and we missed it by that inch which sets

one's heart uncomfortably in one's mouth. And lastly, at the entrance of the village, down a slight slope, big gates were shut in the dark which I have never known shut before, and I personally missed a bad smash only because of the happy African custom of building a gate with supporting posts but with no flanking walls. As it was I journeyed unhappily through some yards of jungle in a way that constituted a unique testimonial to the make of my bicycle. And yet it was a hundred yards farther on that I broke the pot!

The African is humorously superstitious, but that night, while developing my photographs, my boy's hair fairly rose as I told him the story. It was he who read the incident of the breaking pot intuitively. 'Your angel-guardian broke it, *Bwana*, and the *Sheitan* went back to Kombeni!' I do not suppose that I shall go again to see.

XV

LATIN, HISTORY, AND SCIENCE

THE wheel has turned again, and I am in these days a secular schoolmaster for the greater part of my time. At first this seems a big drop from theories to facts, and I think so, often, as I pick my way to the High School down a ' road ' which I would give a good deal to be able to put on paper. There is the open mosque at the corner with its lounging crowd; the uneven stony way in the bright sunlight; Hindi shops and houses belching out goats and children and smells and slops and refuse on either side; then a sad house of women who were part of the late Sultan's harem; then a Koran school, whose teacher always greets me cheerfully through the bars of the unglazed window with the Arabic *Sabalkheri*; and then the High School. It towers up honestly and solidly as a Norman keep, a great white square block of a place with thirty-one windows and a door in the front alone! You pass inside to a

A STREET IN THE CITY

courtyard open to the sky and enclosed by a cloister on which the ground-floor rooms open. There are only two stories above, but all is very lofty and quite imposing in its white massy simplicity. The stairway is winding and small, but leads to another big encircling cloister on the first floor, out of which the class-rooms open, the sunlight glancing through the white pillars into the great well of the courtyard below. The final set of rooms above offer a view over all the roofs of the city, and it is broken for a wide space where we sometimes take our tea at the level of the Cathedral spire. One looks down upon a rather fascinating display of terraces and courtyards, many gay with flowers and shrubs and occasional trees. More, I must confess, present an incredible miscellany of rusty iron bird-cages, old gutters, and broken tools, while a house just below me displays with pride a horse-hair sofa which probably began life in Soho or Bloomsbury about the mid-Victorian era. The sofa and I have, however, struck up quite a friendship. It is always reminding me of the one off which I used to roll in my curate days. I trust my old landlady will never allow that to be sent on exile in so dismal a fashion, to end its days

in a pitiful complaint to a hostile tropical sky as this below me.

School begins at 9 A.M., and mine is the first class, although I do not do all the first-class work owing to a smaller division for Latin, History, and Science. Nothing is half so great as it sounds, because, of course, the boys are hopelessly ignorant to begin with, and have no kind of home or outside influence to help them at all. I began, for example, to teach History, and have really had some extraordinarily interesting classes, but I soon found that it was utterly hopeless to begin as one does with English boys, for these have no idea of chronology, of relative sizes, or of numbers. They know absolutely nothing—not even the recent facts of local history; for instance (actually), that there had ever been a slave-market here! That is so incredible to us, but one has to remember that they never seem to talk either with old men or among themselves except on the affairs of the moment. Well, I determined at last to practise certain theories of historical teaching which are being put forward tentatively in England. We started to learn history by beginning with NOW! I began by holding up a rupee and asking whose

was the image and superscription. One bright boy said Edward VII. (explaining, after much thought, that VII. meant that he was the seventh King of England), and I got them *puzzled* as to why Sayyid Halifa should be Sultan and yet Edward or George King. To explain the protectorate idea, I made one boy stand for a captain of a German man-o'-war threatening to bombard the city, and myself played the part of the Consul-General and British Agent at the subsequent interview. So we go on. I have set them looking for the oldest building in the town (it is a *Portuguese* fort) that they may ask who built it, and I want to collect a miscellany of postage stamps, old swords, old pictures, and such like, to serve for object-lessons.

The private classes are queer too. I have four enterprising youths who wish to learn Latin, hoping finally to graduate at Bombay or even in England—a Parsee, a Hindi, a Spanish-Eurasian, and a Goanese. I have great hopes of the Hindi, a good-looking boy of about thirteen, whose type of face is very European. It is, of course, not really *black* either. He is very keen, and his face is so extraordinarily sensitive, with eyes that simply glitter, and nostrils that twitch with eagerness

now and again. He is very much of a boy, too, much keener on genuine games than most of them, and the most promising patrol-leader I have.

I took this Indian boy on his bicycle to Mbweni one afternoon, and got the *padre* there to show him a drop of ditch water under a microscope. It was extraordinarily queer to watch him. These Indians never express their feelings very openly, and he only looked and smiled. But he was much impressed—and so was I, as always, as a matter of fact. He was shown that there was positively 'nothing' in the clear water; he was allowed to see how small a drop was placed on the glass, and how it was pressed flat by an upper glass in order that the ocean should not be too deep; and then the focus was fixed, and he was told to look. By good luck we had hit on a rich drop. You saw the dead body of a great sea-monster a-sprawl on the bed of the sea, while an army numbering many hundreds of swarming infinitesimal creatures was engaged, in two streams, in devouring the carcass. They ran up and down their lines with the precision of our *siafu* ants, and they swarmed over the body like the ants over a big beetle. And yet, without the micro-

TO ARMS!

scope, there was nothing to be seen except, on a second detailed examination, the tiniest speck of 'dirt.' I do not think that the boy will ever forget it. We bicycled home slowly together, while the sun went down behind the palms, along these roads which are ribbons of white through a tangle of green. He asked me if this was all 'alive' too, and I tried to let him see not only a vision of this infinite world and of its yet more infinite Designer, but of the Father-hand which controls and directs the least of these.

That brings me to the Boy Scouts, which we started when school reopened after the holidays. I have a house in the country near the sea all to myself, and I have begun by training eighteen boys, whom I hope to make officers in the six or seven patrols I shall recruit when the uniforms come from England. The whole scheme is, of course, at present very tentative, but it has 'caught on' among the boys most happily. It is all very curious, because they know already the things at which English boys are so slow—I mean camping and the actual scouting in the bush—and they are utterly hopeless at a good deal English boys are keen about. Imagine yourself trying to explain the compass

to boys who have no idea of what you mean by north, and to whom the conception of the earth as a ball is one of those incomprehensible European notions which is obviously only true in school, and which is flatly denied by everybody outside. However, they simply love drill, and I believe they are dimly perceiving something of the big brotherhood of the thing. Of course, I have to teach them most literally. They are convinced that if they landed in England, the scouts of the neighbourhood would immediately welcome them as long-lost brothers. But more of these later on.

Then we have four times a week a couple of the richest Arabs in the town coming here to be taught. I take English and History; and I like my pupils immensely, especially one, a quiet, gentlemanly man of perhaps twenty-five years, who was at Mecca this year. We are doing the history of the Arab, Saracen, and Turkish peoples, and the other day were at the life of Mohammed. I sketched it as we know it in history, and then compared briefly the three great prophets of the Mohammedan rosary, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. I tried to show as gently as possible Mohammed taking the sword and our Lord taking the Cross. It was

all History, and he did not mind in the least. And then, in the middle, I was called out to see a stately old gentleman from Lamu, anxious to board his two boys here and to have them taught. We discussed it for a while, and then he said, 'Of course, sir, you will not teach them Scripture?' My colleague and I hesitated, and said we made it a point with boarders, as, by diocesan order, we are compelled to do. Then I asked, 'You would wish them, however, to be taught English, a little History perhaps, a little Science?' 'Oh, certainly, sir,' he said, 'as much as you please.'

And therein, lies, of course, our *raison d'être.* Here is a young 'nation,' that is even not yet a nation, literally discovering itself. It is everywhere asking for teachers, and it knows that its only hope lies in being taught. It is as yet inarticulate and chaotic, and it often does not know its own mind; and it is half angry, half fearful too. We are here, possessed of a liberty towards God and Knowledge wherein Christ has made us free, and we are trying to help these men and boys out to our freedom. It would be Christ's work if we only taught them the science of earth and sky: the one is His footstool, the other His throne.

But we believe that as their eyes open to these things their minds will open to more besides. They too will ask How ? and Why ? and To what end ? and our hope is that then we shall be the teachers to whom they will turn, we who confess that our Lord is the Word of the Father and the Beginning and the End.

XVI

ROOFS IN THE SUN

FROM the elevation of our topmost story can be surveyed the whole of the little peninsula which shelters the more distinctly Indian, Arab, and European half of the town. The panorama is, I think, a fascinating one, even if the coming of 'corrugated iron' has proved a disastrous invasion from the point of the picturesque. Much remains, however. Still, wherever one looks, the green of cocoa-nut or casuarina or banana or mango stands out among the roofs; still each flat house-top or open baraza presents a spectacle of this remote Eastern life; and still a sea of colour, that is only called Italian blue because East Africa is less visited, hems us in. Glimpses only of the water appear distantly on the southern side. But as our vantage point is but a few hundred yards from it on the northern, one can see its roll and heave, catch the breath of crested waves, and look out to a fringe of gleaming

white sand-banks and magically green islets which sleep under the sun.

I do not think the sea imprisons. Round the point of Prison Island, the quarantine station, comes a white-sailed dhow, its triangular sail bellying out in the breeze, and its rough-hewn but sharp prow cutting the blue sea into a roll of white foam till it seems an incarnation of the spirit of freedom. At anchor, a couple of liners are waiting for the set of sun to swing out of the roadway for Europe or the South, as though they were calling lingerers to make up their minds and be free. It is the land that imprisons, and for us the Gospel that chains us here.

The roofs always suggest that a giant child has been at play, for the sheets of grey metal lie loosely on one another, to all seeming like card palaces. Here and there native cocoa-nut matting obtrudes, or domineering stone, but for the most part people prefer to build cheaply and live dry. Then again, the houses are thrown down in an enormous tangle, in which, at first sight, it is not possible to detect a plan. But one can peer over the edge of our high unbroken walls into one of the city's ways, which looks from here like a deep and narrow

gutter alive with swarming pygmies. Straining, sweating, half-naked Swahili porters; busy Banyan shopkeepers; Goans, pseudo-European; now and again an Arab who has kept his leisure alone of all the possessions that were his; such is the motley crowd. But above are the people of the roofs, and chiefly Indian women. Ours are the lower caste people from the Bombay districts, but for my part I have a great admiration for them.

Their dress is one of the most graceful: a loose wide skirt, usually brick-red for the rough work of the house, and a long graceful cloth wound about the shoulders and brought up to cover the head and hang behind, these are the principal portions. But as the wearer works the wind blows both about. Then one sees the queer tight little bodice enclosing the breasts before and tied with strings behind. It fulfils all decencies, and where it fails the Tropics and the East are agreeably emphasised! She is a domestic little woman, too. In the sun below gapes the well-like courtyard of a big Indian *ménage* enclosed on all four sides by rooms opening into wide verandahs and topped by a space of cement flooring, and here she is constantly appearing. One is washing, econo-

mising water from a big gleaming copper vessel by her, and beating the dirty clothes vigorously with a short baton, which is poised above her for the second stroke before the thud of the first reaches me. Two more are spreading pink and yellow and blue and orange garments on the roofing. Another is mothering a baby while she croons some Gujerati song. And yet another is grinding grain in a circular stone mill as well as she can with half a dozen brats about her. Of course, there are disabilities. If I were nearer I should find that cleanliness makes a poor second to godliness here, and that my Indian damsel can spit like a Spanish sacristan. But she is a real mother for all that, and motherhood covers a multitude of sins.

Between us and the sea is a suggestive line of roofs. First, very cool in the glare, is the round crenellated low tower (whose white walls shine through climbing fig trees) of the old Portuguese fort which became a prison when the conquering Arab taught new deaths to the countrymen of Vasco da Gama. Eye-witnesses have told me of later executions, and here too they used to bundle slaves before exposure in the market. For all its cool white and green, it is red with hate and lust and blood. But

INDIAN CHILDREN

its day is over, and a stone's throw away is the tall garish palace of the later sultans. The present building has succeeded to that which Admiral Rawson knocked to pieces on the stroke of nine that day of the bombardment in 1896. They said that Christian cannon-balls turned to water when fired at Moslem walls, and no one dreamt that any punctuality would be observed in so delicate a business; but the first shell dropped into Khalifa's council chamber when the Admiral said it would, and something went wrong with the conjuring! Well, the rooms are Government offices to-day, and the Sultan has come down to the next roof, of which I can see little save the red flag on the flag-staff above it. This old Arab house, once the harem, dreams in a garden of palms, with the palace square before it, of the glory that has departed from its princes. But I have no doubt which of the three I should prefer, or which régime thus symbolised is best for the clustering roofs around.

Only three spires and not a single minaret pierce our sky. Two are twins, and of a pleasing and not inartistic grey stone. Between them, rising from the courtyard of the presbytery, is visible a date palm planted fifty years

ago by the aged Catholic priest who has given his life to the work of the Church among the Goans here. The other is thinner and more distant, nearer, too, that background of the far-stretching woods which hems us in on the one side that the sea has not left free. Another faithful servant is kept in memory so. But how different looked this city to Charles Edward Steere! Yet not so different after all, for his eyes were on the same need and the same Lord.

Ah! that need! it can be seen, too, from the roofs. Across our scrap of garden—which yet boasts three cocoa-nuts, one date palm, and a fig tree!—is a queer hemmed-in house connected with a big place in the street by a narrow passage. The front is towards us, and is suggestive of a building from which one side has been stripped, because the big open verandahs are like rooms, and more used than most. Here a number of Swahili women, dark-skinned, noisy, and curiously African as opposed to their Indian neighbours, are herded together. That is the only way to put it, for these are victims of that system of concubinage for which Mohammed dared claim the approval of God, but which, more unmistakably than anything

else, has the approval of the devil. They, too, seem busy in their rather lazy way, plaiting fibrous baskets, cooking, hair-dressing, and dancing at night in full view of the roof-world. There are children there, although the Swahili children are few compared with the Indian. They play about merrily enough, but one wonders sadly at thought of their future. The little girls must grow up to damning instincts in a house such as this, and the boys will, normally, learn to think of them in a way that ruins marriage and makes motherhood a bitter thing.

Through the hot sun from the beach came sailing a score of hideous carrion crows. Their shadows streak the roofs and stain the air. It seems somehow a parable of many things.

XVII

AMOS IN AFRICA

His day and mine are both nearly over when we meet in the big High School, which rises four-square from the huddled roofs of the Indian houses and the crooked ways of an Arab city only a few hundred yards from the still sea. The room in which we meet rather captures the imagination. The general builder aimed at a solid and massy grandeur, and all his rooms, grouped round a central courtyard, are lofty in height and thick in wall-space; but this one is small in size, and the more curious. Its height must be easily three times its breadth and twice its length. Its floor is of concrete and stone. Its walls are whitewashed, and their towering simplicity is only relieved by curious-bulbous-shaped niches in two tiers, for I have not a picture to set between them. The table is unfurnished deal, the windows are unglazed, with wooden shutters. But a row of books companion the wall behind, and a

hanging star of electric light falls from the gloom above us.

Outside the incessant daily noise of a company of copper-smiths, who beat on the cold metal seemingly indifferent to the din or fatigue, is for a while stilled. The flat cement roof of the long row of houses in which they live is on a level with our windows, and as I glance out I see in the moonlight a woman crooning to her baby, where a leafy mango spreads boughs over the flat. The white light gleams on her heavy silver anklets as she moves. Below, the yellowish body of a Banyan workman sprawls on a native bed in the lamplight. From far away—of all sounds !—come the jarring notes of a gramophone, and from the street below, now the clatter of sandals, now a hasty sentence.

Mwalimu [1] and I are reading an older record than any of these. One ought always, I suppose, to avoid undue sentiment, but I cannot get away from the strangeness of this experience. We are reading Amos these nights, and it is as if the strange crying figure of the rude herdsman, whose words burn and tingle as when Azariah, priest of Bethel, was first stirred by them, were with us once again. He comes

[1] Swahili, 'the teacher.'

out of the night, and he goes into the night, the night of immemorial years, whose antiquity engulfs and annihilates the differences between us two. That the African, the product of fifty years' Christianity, and that I the Englishman, the product of near fifteen hundred, should meet here, is to me a marvel. Yet we are both young alike by Amos; we are both born of That of which the prophets cried out of the distant past; and we have both come up on Gentile feet to the City of Zion to find that now there is neither Jew nor Gentile there. And we are both alike students; we both feel the kindling hand of her who is 'radiant and fadeth not away'; and we both look up at each other across the table with the vision of Israel's doom gripping at our hearts and the cry of jealous Jehovah in our ears.

There is nothing the least unusual really about it all, but this Bible study together of the white *padre* and the black evangelist is new to me. He sits opposite to me, with his white shirt open a little at his brown throat; and my eyes take in all the while the unquestionable wool and the thickened lips that were known first to Europe when Europe first knew slaves. A jumble of thoughts makes an undercurrent

to my own study. 'This is really Africa! Your father was a slave! we, who are so different, have come from the ends of the world to meet here!' . . . His own eyes speak for the man, and I do not think, 'Are converts a failure?' but, 'Thank God for this!' He knows his Bible, too, so well. I remember how at first I rubbed up dusty Cambridge notes that I might give Jehu's dynasty its proper setting, but I found Jeroboam II. was no bewilderment to him, nor the battle of Beth-Shemesh! Last week he had found me the reference to Jehovah's hook in Assyria's nose before I had done with the sculptures of Lachish, and I think he lives in the New Testament.

He is a poor hand at taking notes, and sometimes finds it hard to keep awake if I make him write down much. Nor do I wonder. His daily round is a long and tiring one, and the teaching trivial and elementary too. Once I went round after him to see what was going forward, and the details of it are printed in my memory. We left the city by the white riband of the North Road, and where a cluster of dark mangoes at a break in the way shelters a small settlement of Wanyiemezi, he finds his first scholars—a few savage-looking creatures, who

ran out to us in the road eagerly enough, however. A mile farther on—where a century ago the body of a holy man was washed ashore, and now fluttering rags and broken eggs at his tomb tell that human nature is too strong for even Mohammed's prohibition of saint-worship—is a second group of hearers, of whom I remember one, an old and wrinkled woman, whom it must be near impossible to teach. At the next village he must daily leave the road and make his way to the sea, to find a little school of boys awaiting him at a beautiful and mysterious place. A tiny spring bubbles up among graceful reeds and big water-weeds on which crimson dragon-flies sun themselves, in a square-cut basin of moss-covered stone under the shade of a great Arab mosque many centuries old, whose spike-topped dome lifts a small crescent against the blue. After his midday meal (for he is early away) he leaves the road at a right angle on the right. The path runs more or less uphill for a couple of miles, through hedgeless plantations of cocoanut and clove, banana and orange and lemon and lime, until it drops to a scattered village on the hillside with a dead white baobab tree as the preaching centre. From the village a long

ridge runs half across the island. On it are huts here and there, and at one place a Christian has gathered a handful to be taught by the Mwalimu on his way back to town. All the way entrancing vistas open out through the clove lines and across the palm tops to the distant sea, which lies in an unruffled stretch of blue for the greater part of the year. But the teacher must be too tired to notice all this, even if he cared very much for what has been familiar to him since his boyhood. Instead he trudges wearily, as the light swiftly fades and the stars leap out, to town for a meal, a night class or even two, and then our study.

I never realised how much it was all upon his heart until, at the close of our first 'Bible class of one,' I asked him to pray after me. He speaks English admirably, but he consented on the condition that he used 'his own words': meaning his own Swahili. So I prayed first, and then he. In this wonderful land it seems to me that one is meeting every day little microscopic incidents that must leave an indelible memory, but this is certainly one of the most real of such to me. I had only heard a man pray extempore in Swahili once before, but then even he was not an African. And

now this native teacher, tired with a long and (as one knows so well from one's own English experience) *dull* day's ministry, bent himself over his chair, and prayed in the soft vowelled tongue. What struck me most—and I do not think it is exaggeration to dwell on it—was the confident ring of the quiet voice, for quietly he prayed, and steadily, as a son grown in years might talk to his mother. He was so reverent, too: 'Holy, Holy Father, Holy Lord God,' he began. I could not follow it all, but presently I caught the Bishop's name, who was absent visiting Christians on the mainland. And then came more names, the names of the villages of his round, and with them sometimes 'the children,' 'the old men,' 'that sick man,' and again 'the little children.' I bowed my own head in my hands, and the breath caught in my throat. And why not? Moses lifted hands like this African's to God, and it cannot have been so very differently that the great missionary Apostle prayed as he remembered the scattered congregations of his planting in unevangelised Europe. And now the Gospel had come to East Africa too. And once again God seemed to have found Him a true prophet in him I was privileged to kneel beside.

The words rang to their finish in the old orthodox worship that has been offered by how many lips in how many tongues and places!—'Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, unto the ages of the ages. Amen'—and quiet fell between us. I hardly cared to break it. There are times when the hush of listening heaven seems to fall on earth, and when the Presence of Him who is content to come for two or three seems apprehensible by sense. The minutes fly while God makes good His eternal promise, and, while men are yet speaking, hears. But at last my own lips moved in a prayer whose first words are so universal that they need no translation. '*Baba yetu*,'[1] we prayed, and as is our old custom, we remembered the Cross which eternally vindicates that title as we said the Grace. When the Faith was young in Europe too, men loved to sign themselves as we do.

So we part, he to his home in the city, I to where the Cathedral enclosure keeps watch by the banks of the creek between the huddled huts of Africa proper across it and the Eastern city on this side. It is a strange walk home.

[1] Swahili, 'Our Father.'

I pass five mosques in fewer minutes, and in one late worshippers are at prayer, bowing, prostrating, gesticulating before the bare niche Mecca-wards, eloquent of the power of the Prophet. Here, in the doorway of his house, sits an ancient father with shaven head and wrinkled face, muttering over the leaves of the leather-bound Koran on his knees, which he reads by yellow lamp-light. There, a sudden glare of light on the uneven narrow dirty stony way comes from a Banyan house, whose owner, with parchment-skinned body bare to the waist, half sits, half lies on a mattress and a red leather cushion, with his big account-book still open before him. Where the street narrows because of projecting ledges of stone, a little row of figures half wrapped in thin cotton clothes lie asleep. They are utterly still in a score of queer twisted shapes, and might as well, one thinks, be dead. Just at the corner, in the open, with the clear stars above him, a white-turbaned Arab sits with a bubbling hookah glowing red at his side. An *askari*, in smart uniform, salutes me as I turn in by Indian houses where the shrill crying of a child is harsh on the night air. And one marvels at it all, for every sight and sound is

the symbol of some phase of this old Eastern world, of this new Western life. . . .

But I cannot help it; I go exultant to my room. I must be away on my bicycle in a moment to a village for to-morrow's Breaking of the Bread, and shall run swiftly through the insect-haunted *shambas* and under the great grave palms. And as I go I shall tell myself with every push of the pedals that the victory lies with us; that in the feebleness and ignorance of that upper room is hid, nevertheless, the great dynamic; and that Mwalimu and I are among that incredible company who turn the world upside down, and are ever amazed when it is done.

XVIII

SCOUTS, BLACK AND BROWN

THERE is something overwhelmingly superior about South African clergy! To-day the English mail brought us one who discovered me in an old green shirt, a pair of khaki riding breeches a little soiled, and what had once been boots. He was courteous, but, over our pipes, firm. It was a pity to scout thus with the natives. Now I wonder; and I propose to submit the question. Picture me sitting in a broken embrasure at the top of a flight of ruined steps which was once the splendid entrance to that great palace of His Highness Sultan Sayyid Said. In front a big mango shaded my view of the sea, still and blue and just breaking in clean little wavelets on white sand which gleamed and sparkled in the sun; while a little to the left, against a thick impenetrable background of undergrowth and palms, there clustered picturesquely a white mosque, the old temple-keeper's house, and a deep clear well. Behind lay the ruined palace. It is quite pos-

sible to trace the plan of it even now—the cloistered centre courtyard with a well, alabaster rimmed, in the centre; the spacious rooms to right and left; the winding stairs to small bedrooms above; the second courtyard, with the marble basins for bathing across it and the women's apartments beyond. But time plays havoc quickly here. It was built in '56, and now thick trees have reft the cloisters, luxurious creepers and ferns riot in the baths, snakes have housed for years in the broken corners of the stairs, and bees hang in undisputed ownership above the entrance to the big dining-hall.

A third of a mile away, across a little river, the wall of another palace passes some hundred yards from the farther bank of the stream. Between the two palaces lies a varied stretch of mangrove swamp, wide sands, tangled undergrowth, and a small village of brown huts, with its usual surrounding belt of cultivated but unhedged plots. It is altogether ideal scouting country. So we had come in the early morning, while the sun was still low and the sea pearl-grey beyond the town, and we had marched through swamp and sand and greenwood until we reached the river and the wall. There I left a big patrol whose totem is the

'Lion'—Swahili boys all, with a touch of Arab blood in them—while I pushed on with the other four. These I set round the palace, but a good two hundred yards from it. The 'Wood-pigeon' (Indian) patrol covered the sea-front, the 'Rook' (Greek-cum-Eurasian-cum-Parsee-cum-Goan !) held the rear, the 'Rattle-snake' (more Arab than Swahili) watched the village, and the 'Bull' (Swahili) lay on the road on our left front. All five patrols made fires and camped, but the guarding four threw out a fringe of sentries. And through the sentries the boys of No. 1 across the river had to communicate with me, a prisoner in the palace. It is good fun being a prisoner because, when the sun is strong enough to skin you, all you have to do is to lie on your back and watch the lizards; but I had to be commander of my guards as well. I made rounds at odd times and inspected the sentries, who, on the whole, were admirable. But I always managed to be back in prison to get my letters. The first came triumphantly and unseen by way of the sea, and its bearer slipped out through the palace into the long grass by the village. The 'Rattle-snakes' got him, though, on his return, and not until one came and went successfully

through the very line of the 'Rooks' did I send the outside world news of my hapless lot!

We do not entirely live 'on the country' on these occasions, but we very nearly do so. Each boy stuffs a penny loaf into his haversack before starting, and each patrol has a ration of tea and sugar and a tin of preserved milk. That and fruit is a royal feast. Fruit, too, is so cheap. Our 'almighty' coin here is the pice, not much smaller than the penny and worth a farthing. For it one can buy a mango as big as a small melon and a meal in itself, or five or six bananas, or a handful of limes, or several huge oranges, and, for three pice or less, a pine-apple. Even so forty boys do not require forty pice, for the old women who sit by the road and sell, lose their heads at the sight of so much wealth if you pour twenty pice into their hands, and set their stock against it. The boys sometimes bring their own delicacies too, and then I share them. Oh! I have learned a great deal with my scouts. I know exactly what that 'grandfather of all the jumbles' (which I have written about) tastes like now; I have eaten Indian brown sweetmeats which come out of dens entirely indescribable; I have filled my pocket first and myself afterwards with nuts retailed

from the baskets of ancient crones looking more like big monkeys than old ladies; and—supreme triumph!—I have shared a tin of sardines with a patrol, and landed my fish as delicately as any one, by the tail! I have not, it is true, eaten dried shark, and I hope I shall not be asked to do so, because one must draw the line somewhere. Finessi (a big native fruit from which one-pice slices are cut with a universal knife) is better, though you can smell it a good few yards away, but shark is unbelievable. Nothing that I ever smelt in England has the least chance of competition.

Round the camp fire we have good talks. At Mtoni, for instance, the enemies' corporal, one of the jolliest of boys and really black and African, asked if I was not afraid to be in the palace. I asked why I ought to be, and he told me there were many evil ghosts there. I instantly improved the shining hour and reminded him that, though not at the moment very apparently one, I was, as a matter of fact, a Christian priest, and was consequently stronger than such *Sheitani*. Much interested, he launched into a long account of two friends of his who had met spirits on the march and suffered in consequence. I lost the drift of

COCOA-NUT WOODS

his Swahili in a very little, but that does not matter; all the stories are the same; one listens politely. Then a boy told me another —in Gujerati. (I do not know a word of Gujerati.) Then I told them one—the Gadarene demoniac. An Indian who knows English put it into Gujerati, and Kanji asked the name of the great Mwalimu. I told him His Name. . . . Then I think we talked about snakes, for religion is only unnatural in the West.

My two scout masters are Christian teachers, and as we tramp along we grow great friends. They both speak splendid English and are outwardly civilised enough; but what amazes me is the real man below still. Marching home from Mtoni, one told me of his Mohammedan relations at home; of the big cave where they sacrifice for rain ('And it *does* come, *padre*!'); of their lingering remembrance of one of our missionaries who, thirty years ago, stayed a fortnight on his way to the then new Msalabani; and, rather strikingly, that the heathen say the native Christians must be liars since they pretend to meet a person many years dead in their churches. This man has a Mohammedan uncle across the creek, an old man of the old school, who objects (wise man!) to the wearing of

European dress, and who believes confidently that he shall yet depart in peace having seen every European throat cut in the island. So as we march along they tell me, incidentally, how they live, and in what strange primitive current runs their thoughts.

But what is especially pleasing is the way in which the boys take to the Scout Law. Imagine a line of Mohammedan boys reciting with Christians that they must fear God and honour the King and the Sultan, I explaining to all that we have one God and that our Lord is the manifestation of God to the Christian; or else promising to be 'pure in thought, word, and deed'; or to be 'little brethren of all the world.' They mean it, too; I make the patrol-leaders explain. What I hope for particularly is the chance of a camp in June or July, and for a fortnight given up to them with its common daily prayers, camp-fire yarns, and sense of good comradeship. In all this I have said nothing of discipline, and of work done for the work itself and not for the reward. But I feel myself that these are no less important in the East than more definite Christian virtues, for it is down this path the Christ must come. It seems sometimes that one can almost hear His Feet.

On this occasion, as we returned to town, we met a Mohammedan funeral—one of the most revolting I have yet seen. The body, wrapped in many clothes, is borne on a kind of bier, round which men leap wildly and abandonly, trying to touch it. The bearers change constantly; and as this was a dervish funeral we had every indication, in rolling eyeballs and even foaming mouths, of that frenzy. As they go they chant hoarsely the creed of Islam, in a way that you have to hear to believe. But the worst feature is the coarse mockery of the onlookers and even apparently of the mourners, who seem to wish almost, as in the hideous Banyan rites, to mock the dead. Well, this company came to meet us, and for a minute I did not know what to do. Then I formed the boys in line and stood them at the strictest attention (I at the salute) while it passed. Afterwards they asked me why I had done so, and I said that Christians honour the dead because they have passed into the hands of God. They considered it a little, and then one big Mohammedan lad said, 'The Christian *dasturi* (custom), sir, is very good.'

Is it worth while to scout?

XIX

NIGHT IN A LAND OF DREAMS

To-day, for three hours and sixty miles, I have been in another world. We had just laboriously finished the Fifth Declension when a note was handed to me containing an invitation to motor during the cool of the afternoon and evening, and in response to it I gathered my legs under a wicker chair and nursed a small cup of tea and a piece of thin-cut bread and butter at the Consulate at 4.45 P.M. for the first time for some months. It was altogether charming, at least to me. The College ought, I suppose, to satisfy one's every instinct, and I am indeed prepared to be entirely content with tea in thick breakfast-cups and thoroughly solid bread and butter, but it is impossible to deny that the change was pleasant. The place of tea was so delightful, too. A little verandah has been built out over the pillared porch, and air, freshened by a punkah overhead, flows in from a garden which, if not perfect, is at least a

praiseworthy attempt; while chairs fulfil their ordinary course at afternoon tea, and group themselves round a wicker table and one's hostess. We talked, too, of ridiculous things: how much wiser Mary would have been to have kept the matchless Cranmer in a dungeon, and to have tortured a collect out of him *per diem* instead of wasteful slaughter; and of the profound solemnity of Chestertonian verse. Then more people drifted in, and it became unnecessary for me to talk, so that I leaned back with a cigarette, allowing myself to admire an amber necklace of Arab workmanship which a lady made yet more beautiful, and to speculate incredulously on the fashions of French millinery in another direction.

Then we descended to the car, a four-seater, whose driver I have since learned to know as a perfect chauffeur, and I found myself in front by a kind arrangement which left me free to enjoy much and talk little. We started, and I settled into my seat. Perhaps it was rather foolish, but I could not but think wistfully that the last time I had felt the hum of a good engine beneath me was in Yorkshire, when we had sped through the brown and gold and purple and grey of the moors that lie

between our Lady Wharf and Rumble's Moor, when friends of a kind one rarely makes sat near, and when the keen crisp air had stirred all one's blood and made the battle good. Here, indeed, it was not quite the same. But the speed-indicator soon quivered between twenty-five and thirty, the white ribbon of a road leapt up again to meet us, and the wind sang by as the spirit of motoring alone can teach it to do.

Africa, too, is seen at its best from the car. The miles rolled off in a succession of beautiful things so quickly coming and so quickly gone that one had only time to be grateful. First we raced under the high casuarinas, past the Sports Club, and, in a wide bend, round the open fields of the King's African Rifles' Headquarters, then, slowing intelligently, into the outskirts of the big native town that we had all but avoided. The *askari* saluted as we swung out to the north, over a low bridge, past wide flats of sand with the city militant beyond them save where the sea glistened stilly in the sun. In a few minutes we were among the trees of the plantations. It is then that Africa seems to hold you in a spell. One passes her plodding peoples on the road: a team of half-naked

Wa-Kikuyu sweating at a load of broken coral for a water-works among the palms farther on; a couple of women, brown earthen water-pot on head, stepping stately to the rude well; a party of white-robed Arabs walking leisurely into town for the endless business of buying and selling *shambas*. Once we slowed down with grinding brakes for a long procession of patient wide-eyed bullocks, whose wagons, heaped with grass, were being driven to market by turbaned Indians of a low caste. Now and again we screamed through a village, the market ceasing to jabber as we fled past; the mosque, with its well outside and its ancient custodian, lying asleep in the sun; and the little brown children, who have forgotten to fear, cheekily saluting by the wayside. Four times in the first ten miles gaunt ruins by the sea reminded us of ancient sultans, whose glory of slaves and concubines is at an end. Once as we passed a small miniature hut, from whose little door fluttered a curtain of strips of linen, one remembered that for these people the bamboo brake behind still hid a devil not cast out. And then, as we breasted a hill through a rich plantation of stately palms and sailed gladly downhill past vistas of fragrant

cloves, the road inclined landwards a little, and the sea was left behind.

Ten miles farther on you see it again. Running under the lea of a line of low hills, themselves one rich tangle of vivid vegetation, the trees thin suddenly right ahead, and the blue of the water glints beyond them. In a little the car was running over a low bridge thrown across a slow-moving stream set in lush grasses and thick rushes, and, moving to the collector's house, we come to a standstill before his door. Down to the beach by a steepish path we follow him, and spend an hour picking up the strangest jetsam of the centuries among the sand-waste of the shore—no less a treasure than antique glass beads of possibly Persian manufacture, thrown ages ago into the sea when a race of conquerors that has left barely a trace behind, paid sacrifice in its turn to the god of the sea.

But the darkening of the day came soon upon us, and with it, for me, the best hour of all. First, far over the low palm-set headland that runs out, across a mile of strait, into the beauty of the north-western sea, the sun began to sink in tropic splendour. He stained the sky with deep blues and yellows and greens, and

then, fiery behind a bank of cloud, his blood dyed cloud and sky and sea. The welter of crimson and gold cast a rich glow over the sand-flats of the receding tide and bathed gloriously the dark flow of the still river. We leaned on the bridge in a glory and heard the insects awake in fairyland. The bull-frogs croaked among fiery rushes which rose from the dark night, and the cicalas answered from black foliaceous trees which stood out gauntly against the reflected glow in the eastern sky. The cool shadows were all about us as the car slowed gracefully down on the bridge to take us in. As we climbed the hilly ascent from the shore we looked back to see, literally, the fall of the glowing sun into that stream which the ancients rightly knew encircled the world, and forward again to a blackness all starred with myriad fireflies. We gathered way over the crest, and silence fell on all of us. At first there was still light enough to see solitary sentry palms on every high hill, or some outlying copse of mango or kapok against the lighter shades of grassy waste. But this soon passed. Henceforth our road, like a deep gorge between high black banks with stars one prodigal glory above and the fireflies no less

generously given below, streamed away past our headlights as it does only in the land of dreams. Now and again a flickering flame shone before us, and we passed the timid patient heads of the bullocks of some country cart bending, with great amazed eyes, under the yoke, their way lit by the guttering light of a small oil lamp behind them, whose sheen glinted on their glistening hides. In the villages small fires twinkled outside every hut, black shadowy folk crowded round over their evening meal, and a fragrant steam went up among the sheltering banana leaves. Nearer town, the long row of lights set in the city shone home-like beyond the bay, and the moon gleamed in silver chains across the flats. Far out among low bushes a small pool was a silver sheet of wonder, and beyond, low on the horizon, there came and went a fierce red star. And as we took the homeward turn a meteor leaped vividly across infinite spaces and hid in the night.

XX

DOWN THE WORLD'S HIGHWAYS

A SINGLE hundred yards of beach, sandwiched between the high wall of the Customs and the short landing pier of a big agent, catches the greater number of that host of visitors who look in on our small island on their journey down the world's highways. We are, indeed, one of those remote cross-roads of the trade-routes which, if less important than those of old Rome, do stud the map of the Empire of the new. No one is much concerned with us, less now than fifty years ago. But one stream from the Suez going south to Table Bay, another from all the lines that round the Cape and come this way north, and yet another from Madagascar, the South African colonies, and some remoter islands on the way to India and beyond, together with a like stream back, all converge here. The travellers land amid a turmoil of straining shouting natives drawn from a huge area roughly bounded by Beluchistan and the

Great Lakes, Somaliland and the Comoros—a turmoil officered by Indian police and Goan officials. Then they push their way up from the fringe of shore boats and the squatting line of fruit-sellers and money-changers beyond the Custom's gate, into the streets of as cosmopolitan a city as you could pick out of the world's stock. When, the other day, an admirable liquor law was framed for the only people such laws can touch, namely island-born subjects, it was found that there was only one hindrance to its working. But this was a considerable one. There were not enough island-born subjects, in a city of one hundred thousand, to make the law worth while!

We who sit under the shadow of the Cathedral spire have our share, naturally, in all that arises from this situation. It would be positively worth while to make a book of a year's visitors if only it would be safe to publish it. Indeed, there would lie in that book a secret commentary on a chapter of the world's history which is an epoch in the making. Of course, even a rich imagination is not always proof against the annoyance of an odd bishop who turns up on a busy day, or a personage whose notes are to be submitted to the inspection of those unseen

A SOMALI OF THE QUAY

controllers of so much destiny in Europe and America; but one does not altogether forget. To-day, for example, I had the vision for a little, while the early rains thundered and soaked among the trees of the garden.

It was after the later morning service that I stumbled on a group, and guessed, in a moment, that I was being offered a glimpse of the great things of the world. We ploughed, therefore, through the deluge, up the stone steps of a miniature water-course, to my room, and having stacked umbrellas and deposited sandals and collected chairs, took mental stock of one another. They saw a priest in a rather dirty white cassock and an unshaven chin who has no part in this recital; but he saw a more imposing array.

First, there was a distinctly dark Indian in the black dress, white collar, Roman stock, and soft hat of the Anglican clergyman at home and of some societies abroad; secondly, there was his companion, lighter in colour but not by so much, with rather wild black hair, two very wet clinging white robes, sandalled feet, and a towel; thirdly, there was a friend in white trousers, kanzu, coat, and red tarbusch; and fourthly, there was a local teacher, who

did the introductions, in ordinary English dress of grey, orientalised by a mixture of superimposed colours and a disregard of the usual manner of wearing them. All four spoke English well, and we were soon on excellent terms. They were not in the least, so far as I could see, conceited; indeed, the ecclesiastic was transparently a simple quiet fellow of no particular distinction. Nor was there—or is there—any mystery about them, for the first three were journeying from a South African college to India with second-class tickets on an ordinary mail. That their like are to be met with wherever a route cuts another route to or from India, is only one indication of their importance.

The three were graduates of an Indian university of distinction, and were Christians. The chief thing about them was, indeed, their Christianity, for they looked at India through it and saw the world in its light. They were representatives of that Christian India which is much larger to-day than the communicant body of the Church of England at home; and the deacon in black was on his way from seven years' service among the Indians of Natal (whose number is equal to that of the Europeans) to visit the Lord Bishop of

Dornkal, whose seat is among those of English bishops first sent to India by Act of Parliament and to this moment officially Lords Spiritual in the Dependency. He told of a recent consecration in the Cathedral he had left, where a crowded church had sheltered South African bishops, Government officers, European Christians, Zulu converts, and Indian sharers of their Faith. His friend had most to say when I inquired, to test him, if he had heard of a certain attempt on Franciscan lines to preach the Gospel in India. He was going indeed, he told me, to sit down among the pariahs of a Presidency where recent electoral considerations have caused much interest to be taken in that class. He spoke quietly of the growth of the Kingdom among such, and said that, speaking for himself as a member of a much higher caste, it was curious to reflect that the future of India lay with them. I asked how, and he replied that they made admirable scholars, and were the poor whom the revolutionary Christian ethic inevitably makes princes. Then his eyes lit on the latest production of Oxford theological scholarship which lay on my table, and he eagerly turned to that. He asked me what I thought of an

essay on the Historic Christ. I passed the answering over to him, and wondered inwardly, with a catch of fear, as he answered that it seemed to him that Western scholars made too much of inevitably obscure documents when they allowed evidence so obtained to overrule our own certain present knowledge of our Lord. It was the simple quietness of it that told, the quietness of the spirit of the religious East which we Westerners saw first in the face of Jesus Christ.

We prayed together before they went, the sense of union amid diversity being very strong; and then they passed out. The scholar shuffled into his sandals, wrapped his towel about him, and went out to his pariahs; the deacon shook hands honestly and asked my prayers against his ordination. And I went back to my chair. I allowed myself ten minutes with open eyes before I returned, as is meet and right, to the enclosed horizon of my own vocation. I saw my strangers, and many more, passing on their way, slaves of the greatest dynamic the world has seen. In its Spring, that dynamic overturned one world; it is at a second and a greater Spring to-day. But the Spirit of the World is blind in our day. If it were wise it would burn these men as Nero did, and so at least die fighting!

XXI

A VESSEL UNTO DISHONOUR

THE pen of Victor Hugo might have done justice to the corner, but even that is a matter of some doubt; yet I shall attempt it, because here is being played one of those incredible mysteries of life with which we are fronted day by day. A narrow lane leads to the place, with Indian shops on either side: one, prosperous seemingly, where a monstrously fat woman keeps toll of the pice with her back to a carved door-post, and her yellow-trousered legs tucked under her; the other, a cavernous abode, with few wares at the door, which pours out of its black depths an odd dozen of children at all hours. Suddenly, however, the way turns sharply right and left, that to the right being the main road. It turns where another shop does busy trade, supervised from a grated window above a lean-to roof of iron sheeting usually heaped with dirty body-cloths, and graced by a shrill person eternally anxious to

disprove the idea that an Indian woman is the creature of her husband. He, with a dirty yellow body bare to the waist, keeps interminable watch below; but we are not concerned with him. Round to the left is a little-frequented alley, even more than usually rough with stones. The shopkeepers pitch their refuse here. A grotesque monkey, bound tightly round the stomach with a shred of linen, hangs above a doorway on one side which leads, by a black passage feebly lit at night with a candle in a tin sconce, to a house of ill-fame belonging to the *surias* of a late Mohammedan notability; on the other side yawns the entrance to a cellar. Ten paces ahead, the way twists again by a high and filthy wall, nor is there even the green of a towering cocoa-nut above it. Here, then, lives the woman of whom I write—in the cellar.

It is a goat cellar. There must be thirty of them, big and little, in the place; and although no one could say what may be beyond, down a cavernous archway into which a little light filters, with Rembrandtesque effect, far ahead, at least the thing itself is far too small for the thirty who are perpetually pushing one another out into the street. The hairy patriarchs of

the flock generally select the doorway for their morning cud, and a cluster of wise heads project on most days as I pass. Their udders are bound up in rough sacking, and the kids push among them whenever a rotting mango or a disused basket of cocoa-nut plaiting is cast out into the lane. Within the entrance, on the left, is a raised dais, where grass and straw are added to a rotting heap from time to time. The stench is what you would imagine. During the rains, when a ghastly brown trickle discolours even the turgid flood that races down the street, the smell is damp, if one may so say, and incredibly nauseous. But in the hot sun, at times, there are no words to express it. It is so utterly sickening—it and the whole place —that one passes in a kind of loathing not even thinkable. And here there lives a woman.

She is old, and her torn grey hairs hang in matted tangles about her. She is always bent ; but then I have never yet seen her in an occupation which would call for a straight back, though —to think of it !—I must have seen her many hundred times. Twelve months ago she was dressed as she was this morning : in a torn and faded dull red skirt, bound about her by knotted tapes, surmounted by an Indian bodice only a

few inches wide in front, and of but two sustaining strings behind. Her back, thus bare, is very old and yellow, as like to ancient dirt-stained parchment as well may be and yet live. She goes bare-foot, bare-armed, and bare-headed too. For the most part she is silent, but she croons at times to the goats ; and once she shrieked.

Maybe my moralising is foolish, but to me she is, I will not say a nightmare for it is more a mystery than that, but at least an obsession. The thought of her haunts me, and will ever do so. I remember her in a series of impressions, caught as I pass the door nearly always thrice a day. They increase often enough, for she is always there. However early in the morning I may visit the place, she is visible, crouching among the filth with a small hand-broom of fibrous cane in her hand, ineffectually cleaning the floor. Once she was bending over a kid with a broken leg, its mother bleating by. Once I caught her half asleep against a crouching beast ; it was then that I paused, and she awoke and fled. Once, at night, the door was open by some mischance, and she was entirely asleep, half hid in a huddle of goat, just visible in the yellow light of a guttering oil lamp ; and

once she was between two naked boys of a few years old, who were trying to beat her flock.

She is, presumably, a slave, one of those who do not know enough to conceive of a freedom which might be hers, or to use it if granted. What one asks is how she came, first of all; from India? from some sweet clean hut among the rice-fields, as a girl, pretty perhaps, loving, lovable? Maybe she was born here; maybe she is half-witted, more than likely illegitimate; maybe she has never seen a tenth as much of Zanzibar as even I! But to me it is a more perpetual puzzle how she lives; if she thinks; if she cares; if her bent body aches; if she ever dreams of a bed and of a choice of food. The end, one speculates more idly; the immediate end matters really so little. Thirty years ago they would have thrown her into the creek, and she would have been one of those bleached bodies which used to strew the beach below the Consulate windows, as Burton says; but to-day it will at least be a dung-heap, possibly even, perhaps, a scratched heap under the dark cool mangoes at last, where the sun flickers in golden arrows, and the moon throws black shadows of forgetfulness.

Of course, the strangest thing of all about her is that in this story there is simply and literally no scrap of exaggeration, nor any speculation beyond the likeliest. She will be there to-morrow unless she dies to-night. She is as much part of this incredible pageantry of Eastern life as the Koran school round the corner, with its bawling, rather jolly, children, or the old fruit-seller just beyond who lives in a booth of empty oil tins flattened and nailed together. In one sense, she is even ceasing to be an astonishment, for really this ancient world, which is new beyond the dreams of a Columbus to a European, vitiates one's sense of wonder by its complexity almost as soon as Suez has grown real out of the morning mist. But to-day I cannot forget this particular morning's impression.

I was aware of trouble before the staring shop at the cross-ways hove in sight, because a din of mixed Swahili and Gujerati penetrated the very enclosure of the Cathedral itself. It is impossible to say what the disturbance was about, but it probably concerned a pot-bellied yelling girl of perhaps four years, who lay naked in the street while two women shook angry fists above her. All the street had come

to see : the comic barber, the fat woman, the crowd which lolls by the mosque next door, the serious coffee-seller, and the ancient pair of cronies who throw one a cheery *Jambo* from the doorway of a Banyan merchant of patriarchal age. Even the goat-herd had come to see. She stood in the sun for once at her corner, with her little broom in her hand, bent restrainingly, even then, over a frisky kid which was anxious to inquire into the disturbance too. But as I came near, her mistress noticed her. I heard a hoarse scream in Gujerati, caught a glimpse of a threatening stick, and saw a weal rise on the bare yellow back as she fled to the inferno. It was thus that I heard her voice above a mutter at last.

Myself, I do not doubt but that the Potter can mould the clay again. It is a 'Great House.' . . .

XXII

THE COFFEE-SELLER

I ASSOCIATE the coffee-seller entirely with the bright side of things. He sits in my mental vision as I have often seen him sitting, in the sun, in a space caused by the emerging of a narrow lane into a rather wider street. Here palms in a green bravery lean over the high wall he faces, and a stately house or two stands just beyond in proud disdain of the huddled goat-herd hovels we have left. I round the corner on him many times a week, and he is nearly always busy at something. Sometimes he is standing over a primitive mortar shaped from a hollowed log some three feet high, and then he is crushing the aromatic berries with a rough wood pestle which he wields with a curiously skilful and powerful twist. Or, again, he will be roasting, and this one knows well round the corner, and I see him crouching over a charcoal brazier with a vessel in his hands wherein the green beans are in constant flying

motion and browning fragrantly. An hour later the fragrant coffee will be stored away, and he will be washing up. Then he squats and even seems to contract a little to gain power, while his place is well in the middle of the street where the loose stones form an admirable water-course. He rubs his brass vessels with dirt and sand. And beside him is a big tin once used for oil, from which the precious water is allowed to flow in a gentle runnel by means of an occasional tilt.

The next good thing about him is that he is so surprisingly elemental. He is obviously an Arab, and yet he is content with little. He stops pounding when I come near (if it is a mortar morning), and I get my greeting well in hand. He is tall and well-built, spare perhaps a little, but finely cut, and since he usually wears nothing but a cloth round the waist, his light brown skin shines brightly in the sun without hindrance. His face is curiously but unconsciously humorous, it being due, I fancy, to the fringe of black hair that is all that is left about a bald top; to a clean-shaven face rather square and heavy, with a big mouth slightly thrust out; and to eyes that suggest to me surprised simplicity at the bewildering

wonder of a world which sets him grinding coffee, and sends a creature like myself out of the land of wealth and unbelievers to gaze upon him. When I smile his face opens up mysteriously, and a very kindly soul looks out. However, he instantly returns to the pound, and I have not lagged ten seconds.

His house could in no sense be described as desirable, though it is true that I cannot say what glowing secrets may be hid in the darkness beyond a half-concealing sheet and a fireplace of stone. Viewed from the street, it is a cave. There are no windows, and the door is identical with the entire front, being sandwiched also between a blank-walled mosque and houses growing in importance as they straggle up the street towards the mansions above. It is cavernous, because I catch at times the far-distant gleam of a fugitive candle. For the rest, I must confess that its atmosphere —such of it, that is, as percolates through to the street—is reminiscent of unwashed clothes and the last meal of fish; but it is a home of some importance. Several men join the coffee-seller towards midday, and an ugly woman, with an uglier business in a house full of young girls round the corner, frequently occupies the

stool by the door. She is pock-marked and coarse, and she wears the hideous frilled trousers of Swahili female full-dress in a parti-coloured fashion which suggests the fool's hose of the Middle Age. But with her, I fancy, my coffee-seller has little to do. He sits, as a rule when in company, with a small brass hookah in front of him cleverly held by his foot, and he talks profoundly with a gesture of its stem.

When actually about upon his trade he is a model of energetic business, and I envy him not only for the possession of his stock-in-trade, but also for his adroitness. The former consists of a bewitching arrangement in wrought and twisted iron of Arab workmanship, whereby the coffee is always at boiling pitch, for suspended below the actual receptacle for the liquor is an open-work basket of metal carrying a mass of glowing charcoal. The whole is swung on chains which gather to a ring in the seller's hand, and which, when grasped tightly, permit the coffee to be poured from the vessel thus made rigid. To this instrument is to be added the nest of china cups which the coffee merchant carries in his right hand. As he goes he shoots these out a little way and catches them again with a musical jingle of china,

which is itself his chief advertisement. But now and again he calls his wares with a long accentuation—'Kaha-a-a-awa! Kaha-a-a-awa!' —coming swiftly through the market or down the narrow lanes to the music of his cups and the rhythm of his swaying urn, until a purchaser attracts his polite attention. Some devout soul, a-sprawl lazily in the door of a mosque, requires refreshment after the labour of his prayers, and produces the necessary coin from the folds of his dirty white garments. It is, of course, the almighty pice. And for that fat copper coin, whose English equivalent in value is precisely a farthing, my cheerful coffee merchant gives out four of his little coffee cups full of a rich-flavoured, thick, hot, delicious coffee that one might seek in vain from Stewart's to the Trocadero.

The urn emptied, on some nights he dresses in a white turban and a kanzu, and goes off to his club. At least, religious though it is, the gathering which I see occasionally when my work has kept me late is as much suggestive of a club as of religion. It forgathers in one of the already mentioned big houses up the street, and that series of fleeting glances through the door, which is all that my heathen

state allows me, shows a curious picture. To the left of the entrance door, the floor of a spacious hall is raised as a kind of big dais. All round the three walls which enclose it runs a stone seat, and mats are spread on the floor. As I pass, my first indication of a meeting lies in the ring of slippers and sandals, of every make and size, which litter the door, its steps, and even the path outside. Scores of pairs are there, in a kind of confusion of twos. Within, their owners sit on the seat or squat on the mats, the more part looking extremely sleepy, though some have Korans themselves and take a greater interest in the proceedings. A reader, whom I have never been able to see, reads in a sing-song, heavily monotonous voice, and at intervals the entire assemblage intone the Islamic creed to that universal chant which, once heard, is never forgotten. By the hour together they keep up this half-minute dirge, which, to my misbelieving understanding, would be a little tiring. Indeed, even my admirable dispenser of coffee, in all the pride of his church clothes, shares my feeling. I have seen his square face and black-fringed head nodding by the corner many times; and as he does not appear yet to have made a profit

large enough to buy a Koran, I only wonder he is as much awake as he is. He sometimes starts at the clatter of my boots without in the night, and his next credo rings defiantly, 'There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Prophet of God.' Well, about Mohammed there are two opinions; but my friend's coffee is so admirable that I am certain to make it is his vocation, wherein, in his cheerful simplicity, he may well abide with God.

XXIII

'THE MOTHER OF THE POOR'

THIS evening, towards sunset, I and another went on pilgrimage. The way lay out of the town by the golf course, and from thence on to the shore which borders it, a shore of keen coral points and fantastic rock-pools with a marge of strange sea-wrack tossed high by the full tides of the monsoon. The water was lapping the uppermost limit of its rise, and adding curious treasures of delicate tropical shells and mysterious fragments of forest growths from across twenty miles of strait with every wave. Its colour was that mingled green and blue which suggests the untrammelled ocean more than any other of the colours of the shore, and there was promise far out of a rich sunset.

Soon the shore gives to a sandy stretch of little dunes covered with queer prickly shore plants, which seem as if they are strays from those fantastic forms which made up the world's

green robe when she was young; and, as if to keep them company, there are strange creatures of the mud and ooze to be seen there also. Land-crabs, with one scarlet claw as big as the whole of the rest of their bodies, lie at the mouths of their holes, with the scarlet barring the door against intruders and shining conspicuously on the mud. A small creature, whose parentage I do not know, but whose body is long and grey and repulsive, and whose means of propulsion appears to consist of two half-flapper, half-claw appendages near its flat and curiously square-looking head, abounds in the waters of a little stream whose mouth the incoming tide converts into a miniature estuary. And then we ascend the hill towards the College by a path which winds pleasantly through thick bushes of frangipanni, with now a plantation of banana and now a patch of cassava on the left, and, on the right, some rich flowering shrubs between us and the sea.

But it was not the College that we sought to-day; and at the top of the hill we followed the path past the teacher's cottages until it struck the shady high road by a huge mango tree, whose roots are a resting place for the weary on their way to town and a centre for

the gossipers of a dozen hamlets. Here we moved to the right, and to the right again in a little towards a house which stands out on a knoll over the bay in a cluster of cocoa-nut palms. Half-way up the approach, however, is a path to the left, and we take it. It ends in an open iron-work gate in a low wall, and one finds oneself in a small disused cemetery.

I had been many months in the island before I heard of the little holy spot, and this was my first visit. It will not, I fancy, be my last, for this is one of those tender places which we only discover by chance occasionally, places where the spirit can rest itself best on the infinite wisdom of God, and gather the lingering fragrances of much that seems to be sinking into man's forgetfulness in order to wrap itself round in the comfort that God forgetteth not. Everywhere here there is a suggestion that dust is returning to the earth as it was. The little place is not, I believe, any longer in use; there is rust on the iron crosses and on the gate; stains make it hard to trace all the words on many of the marbles; and the casuarinas above, singing their own song in the wind, have scattered a grey dust of needles and wood below from which the grass cannot

spring. And yet I love it so. Dusk lay on all as we pushed open the gate, and we had hardly done so when the Angelus rang out clear and soft from the College hid among the westward trees behind. We turned, and all the glory of the dying sun glowed red and wild behind the black trunks. Three by three the bells rang out, and we commemorated the Handmaid of the Lord to whom it was done according to His Will, and cried the majesty which was the reward of her obedience.

And then, in the dying light, we went quickly across the little space to the grave of another handmaiden for whom there had been, too, the Will, the Sword,—and the Reward? Maybe (I doubt not myself) this forgetfulness of earth, and safe gathering into the arms of God, would have been all her desire. The grave is a simple one. There is a small Calvary, and below, on a raised slab, the dates and name, and then, beneath the moving simplicity of the Latin 'Vox . . . audita est,'[1] this:

'MAMA WA MASIKINI AMEKUFA.'[2]

She was a rich girl in the Paris of the 'thirties, and she married at seventeen—a love match.

[1] St. Matt. ii. 18. [2] 'The Mother of the Poor is Dead.'

In the full flush of that early happiness he died, and she was left alone. In her sorrow she turned to God and not against Him, and asked what was the answer to the riddle of life He had set in her way. And this island was the answer. They were founding the Catholic Mission here in those days, among the slaves and fevers and crowded streets of a town which not even Burton had visited at that early date. And she came to help, not as a religious, but as a private lady, with her wealth and her youth, and she lived here for nigh on fifty years. She brought the French sisters out, and built the first hospital, and visited over the creek, all the while the whipping-post stood in the slave-market, and the turn of the tide washed bodies on the shore. There were no clean roads then, and the secret of the mosquito was not known. Big swamps lay about the town, and the filth of an Arab and African city without sanitation or supervision appalled even the naval lieutenant who merely walked once or twice through its streets. Picture her up and down under the blaze of the sky, enduring every infection that the sun sucks up, in and out of close huts and unsavoury people, her, the rich Parisian girl—and for fifty years. And then

came a change of régime, one of those regrettable but unavoidable ecclesiastical changes which seem always to be human blunders obtruding into the divine mission; but with it went her life. Her sisters were changed; the work of fifty years had made a groove, and maybe it was well to strike out a little differently. But some plants are too tender for much uprooting, and this had roots very deep down. So they were torn, and she died.

Standing by the marble edging of her grave, I raised my head and looked out. The little Calvary stands near the edge of the enclosure, and beyond the hedge is a clear space of grass-land for some hundred yards or so, and then the sea. It was all so still, the tree-crickets beginning in the distance indeed, but not here. The water of the bay hardly moved, and the stars were stealing out one by one. At my feet lay all that was mortal of a hidden life spent, like ten thousand more, out of the central arena as men count things, and uncrowned by any of the more obvious rewards. She did not make many converts; I half feel she did not try. There were others to preach and shepherd; she, with a broken alabastron of very precious ointment, would just anoint here and there

weary feet going swiftly down to the burial. As in the children's allegory of the Three Brethren, many caravans must have stolen out of the city by night on their way to the land where tears are dry for ever, laden with treasure she had thought given away in the dark hut or by the side of the glaring road. She never saw them go, nor watched their storing in the City of the King; for her only the weary days, the fret and worry, the grief at the heart. Of course, she got used to it all in the end, but a heart that is never hardened cannot altogether forget its own pain. And she did not harden; she had too many children for that. Only God knows how many, and only God knows in what travail she bore them, for only God knows how great is the family of the Poor. More than those who lack money figure there. . . . So I knelt and called her Mother.

XXIV

'IT SHALL BE LIGHT'

THERE are commonly two kinds of ways of looking at the world, the one in which every incident seems to be detached, and the other in which all follow in a necessary order. But there is a third way which is less common, and by which we are delivered from Agnosticism on the one hand and sheer Determinism on the other. In this way the world goes on with delightful and human unexpectedness until, quite suddenly, we are sometimes aware of a little chain of incidents before us which seem possessed of a meaning all their own. One is certain they are set with a purpose. Like a good many chains laid across ways, they trip us up. We are startled into seeing, blind though we mostly are. It is a kind of vision.

. . . . . .

The other day was more nearly akin to November in England than anything we had had before in twelve months. The air was

damp, and at least suggestive of chill. A grey fog smothered the native town across the creek, hung low under the trees in the Cathedral enclosure, and swirled seethingly across the Palace square. The lights of the evening fires burnt yellow and low; and although a moon hung somewhere in the sky, it only served to darken the shadows and call up a world of ghosts. Before sunset I had gone to pay a call; and the hour was shortly after six, with fast paling sky, as I came out into the cold, wet breath of the mist.

I had come from a queer interview, and pondered it as I walked. Upstairs, convalescent after a sharp accident in the works of his department, was a friend whose point of view is as nearly the opposite of mine as the point of view can be for two men who name together the same Name. I respect him enormously for his sound, practical, able life; I am amazed at the subjects which interest his soul and by the arguments with which he justifies them. If it is not incredible to listen while a full-bodied Anglo-Saxon, if ever there was one, proves that he is a Reubenite or a member of the half tribe of Manasseh by the evidence of Zephaniah or Habakkuk, or finds the Anglo-

Egyptian policy in an obscure chapter of Ezekiel, or places a thousand-year reign of our Lord somewhere in the next decade on the evidence of the author of Daniel, then there is nothing wonderful in the world. But he had done all these. He had, further, referred to a certain religious paper which I confess to reading for even flippant purposes as 'that distinctly sound paper'; and, in a word, he had left me bewildered that we two ordinary, reasonable, fairly intelligent Englishmen could be so different in judgment and credibility, and live.

But I had not come away annoyed; far from it. Instead, deferring to my ministry (although my superior in every way) with a habitual courtesy so gentle that I am humiliated by it, we had closed with extempore prayer, I leading till we came to the Throne hand in hand with the 'Our Father.' And now I was in the street, warm with a sense of brotherliness, bewildered by a feeling of impotence, sad that the Truth seemed so far.

But the end of a chain was in my hand, and in a few breathless minutes I picked up the links one by one. First, arrestingly, the light streamed from the doorway of a mosque a

hundred yards up the street. In the fog I peered through to the warmth within, and in so short a space caught the details of the picture—the wide mat-spread door, the spans of bulbous-headed pillars, the carved niche Mecca-wards before which the line of white-robed turbaned Arabs swayed and gesticulated to the guttural crying of their leader after the manner of their Way. A little fellow behind a pillar at the end of the line was trying to imitate his father, and two sprawled lazily with a dull indifference against the farther door. A new speculation wound its way into my thought, and the fog wrapped me round. . . .

A couple of minutes, and wide-flung doors again held my steps. I looked up a flight of marble stairs to a divided entrance where stands a carved Christ with outspread hands, and through to a wide nave, in semi-darkness, fairly full of worshippers. Beyond, a garish chancel held an altar lit by scores of candles, seen through whose sheen the Virgin behind, in blue and gold, held out the Child. Benediction was nearing the supreme moment. With that kind of dignity which seems to be the prerogative of Rome, a priest was climbing a short humiliating ladder to reach the

monstrance, while a thin line of incense went up in a stillness that was very real. He came down and turned, and showed us what he held. . . . It was indeed a curious thing to see from the street of a Mohammedan town, and their method is by no means our own; but I was a man christened and this was a Christian church. So I knelt briefly within the iron gates. But then, in a harsh roar, an incredible choir, hid in a gallery above me, began to murder 'Adoremus,' and every anti-Latin sense came back to me. I hurried away.

Half a dozen twisted dripping streets lay between me and the Cathedral enclosure. Avoiding children here and goats there, it is not easy to think, the more so when every corner holds a new wonder and often a new sorrow. There are white women at a bar on the way, a squalid tumble of Hindi houses just beyond, and a house of the *surias* of a late nobility a little nearer home. But as I passed all these it dawned on me that this was the evening hour of prayer, and that I was hearing something of the cries which this city sends up through the night against the face of God. The despair of it! This wild, confused, and tractless world, how hard for feet to tread

or souls to love! What can God make of the appalling muddle, the blind folly, of our tragedy?

I turned in under the scarlet acacia whose gaunt bole gleamed coldly in the dank air, and realised I was late for Even-song. Well, I was too sad to care in any case. And then God put the last link into my hand, and I saw that He had set a chain before my way.

They were singing in the big shell of a church which shelters the grave of him to whom we in the Mission owe so much. The vowelled Swahili came softly to the plain Gregorian that I unreasonably tire of so often, and for a few seconds it was the cadences only that one heard. Then, like a silver bell, one sentence leaped out clear, ringing through a lost weary world as it has ever rung since Mary's lips broke into song at the first hailing of her Motherhood. As for me, I stood there in the mist and damp, and repeated the message again and again. In a little I had found my way inside the three parts empty church (for it was only an ordinary daily service), and I was looking up to the rising altar set with a cross, whereon is depicted a Lamb as it had been slain—although I only knew it to be there, for it is not visible

from the back. But even that is a parable. And so I gripped the credal words when their turn came, and found a way to faith.

. . . . . .

Perhaps it is not necessary to write Mary's words; to me the whole 'Magnificat' centres round them; but they are these: '*His mercy is on them that fear Him throughout all generations.*'

XXV

IN FESTA

If one thing more than another can help towards a realisation on earth of the true meaning of the credal word 'Catholic,' it is to spend a Festival or two in Africa; and it is borne in upon me, as this Christmas concludes, that I have been fortunate to have had that experience this year. Christmas and Easter, or Easter and Christmas as it was to me, present the round of Christian experience; and I have seen them as a real part of the experience of a miniature Christian Church, however new and raw that Church may be. I recollect that nine months ago it was my lot to give the Passion Services of Holy Week to the sisters, and join in the worship of a village church in the great Thanksgiving on Easter Day. That wonderful morning I was up before the dawn and in the Convent chapel; but at the first hour of the day, as Africa counts time,

we all forgathered in the church of the village for the Lord's own Service where the mind of the early Church so soon placed it—with that God-given instinct which recognised that it was no memorial of a supper, but a sacrifice crowned and consummated in the dawn of the first Easter. The simple dark building was full, and with such a congregation! First, the little procession behind a cross that is the real symbol of liberty out here; then the hearty, fervent, unaccompanied singing; then the 'dismissal of the catechumens,' which seems to carry one back through the centuries so strangely at first; then that immemorial 'Sursum Corda' which has been sung by all the saints in all the centuries in all lands; and then the Communion. They moved slowly in two streams past me, those black faces, old men and women who have themselves known the horrors of the slave-gang, slave-market, and whipping-post; younger people to whom 'other gods' are more than the legend that they are to us; and children who have been saved, in some degree at least, a childhood as terrible as heathen childhood is known to be. And they knelt to receive at the hands of a priest, himself once

a slave, that same Sacrament which one's friends were receiving in century-old churches so far away. Here many old bent men and women bear in their bodies the fearful marks of the days when they sat 'in darkness and in the shadow of death,' and I think Another, marked and scarred, saw something of the travail of His soul in them and was glad.

It was with much of that feeling that I witnessed on the Eve of Good Friday a scene which impressed itself vividly upon me. In a hut on this plantation there had been for some time an old leper-man, dying very slowly and very painfully. The English *padre* used to visit him from day to day and come back with his story—the dark hut, the awful sickness with its terrible concomitants, and the steady faith of that old negro. At last he could neither move nor be moved, and the disease had played ghastly havoc with his face and throat; but even so he wanted the Communion of his Lord. It was sickening work even to enter the hut, but his wife, whom heathen custom bade abandon him months ago, hung on bravely to the last. A sister dressed his wounds, and I have seen her white face as she

came away; and on Maundy Thursday God gave him peace. Natives who would not, as heathen, have touched the body, wound it in cloths and carried it to the grave; and as we stood around, under the hot tropical sun, one felt that the 'hope' was more 'sure and certain' for us all than ever one had felt it to be before. God knows our Christians are not perfect; how should they be who were born in savagery and dragged to civilisation in slave-chains? But it is in Africa that you catch your breath with awe now and again at the nearness of the God of the whole earth.

And now there has been the Christmas experience to set over against the Easter, a Christmas more intelligible by reason of the months that have separated them. Again it was in the village that the Feast began for me, again before dawn like Silvia on her pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and again in the Convent chapel. The little sanctuary was beautifully decorated with tall cocoa-palm branches against the white Oriental pillars, and there were banks of alamander, oleander, and hibiscus on and about the stately altar against the hangings which the community has itself painted. One of the sisters has a lovely voice, and as it rang

out at Vespers of the Eve in that carol of the silver bells, it seemed as if music was pealing all about us for the unveiling of a shrine. And so the sun set on a perfect evening, and half an hour before midnight, as I came out of the clergy-house, the moon rode high in a clear sky, and the woods stretched away on either side in that bewildering fantasy of light and shadow which only moonlight can produce. No one who has seen them ever forgets the dead black tree-trunks and the silver-glistening palm-fronds of an African moon-lit night. And right ahead the little chapel glowed with light. It streamed yellow and ruddy from the open sacristy door, with the sister's shadow, as she prepared for the service, coming and going across it; and then the bells rang out. I stood at the door and watched the brown folks come up, the women walking, close wrapped in their graceful native dress, with that stately carriage born of labour with the water pots which must have been Mary's on that first night. And then we went in, and the Service of the Centuries began. The language of the slave for the worship of the Manger-born—so it came to me when the Breaking and Pouring were complete, and

the hushed chant came up in waves of prayer :

'Njooni tumwabudu,
Njooni tumwabudu,
Njooni tumwabudu Yesu Kristu.'

('O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.')

At 5.45 I was on my way to town for the big sung Eucharist—for that name of thanksgiving seems to fit best at Christmas—in the Cathedral. Before I left the village street a presage of what was to be the wettest Christmas any one can remember in the island was given to me, for white rain clouds came rolling up over a leaden sea, and the thick heavy drops fell pattering on the dark mangoes which line the road. I was drenched before the creek came into view, but the native town across its water looked so beautiful that I nearly forgot the wet. A grey-blue mist hung about the brown and black of the huts, and behind the palms the sky was still pearl in the morning light far out and away to the north. The people came splendidly, despite the weather. The Cathedral seemed full, and the singing carried you away. An African priest preached—a short ringing sermon, with his back to the whipping-post altar and the grave of the pioneer bishop—and

sang the service extraordinarily well, too. Our *Inueni Mioyo* rang out before Europe heard the invitation to lift up the heart, but we ushered in the Birthday well here, in Mohammedan Africa. It is easy for a missionary to give way to sentiment, and it is, doubtless, a heinous crime; but that again is one of the things I shall never forget—the black-faced and bare-footed African, richly robed in white as the early Church saw fitting so many centuries ago, standing out there against the spreading arms of the Cross, with his own hands uplifted, and his voice singing the cadences of the rich Swahili, very purely, very low :

'Na tumshukuru Bwana Mungu Wetu.'
('Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.')

Several have asked me from time to time if our converts are successes or failures; and, although I know now as strangers do not guess, how incredibly weak they are, there is a very revolutionary answer which I might give them. At 8.30 that day—ten minutes after the black folk had sung their last carol—I celebrated for the thirty odd white people of the one hundred and twenty in town who cared to remember the birthday of our Lord.

It was a very happy and holy service, but very different. Of course, one must not judge, and our Lord knows how hard it is for a European to keep faith and penitence anywhere in these days, especially in Africa; but the contrast between the services was very noticeable, and if human judgments are asked for, there can be no doubt as to this. . . . At 9.30 we white people all breakfasted together—a very jolly party—and at 10 a very fair congregation, despite the rain, met to sing Morning Prayer and hear a short sermon. It was upon St. Luke ii. 16: 'They found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger,'—that Eternal Family into which every son of man must be born if he would be saved; that Golden Circle, perfect from the first, yet ever widening with the ages.

The rain poured down all the day, and most of the night, and all St. Stephen's Day too, and, needless to say, we had none of good King Wenceslaus' snow to learn saintship in! Still, I suppose what we had was an excellent discipline; and as we waded from the High School down what had been a street and was now a torrent, or thought enviously, on our way to the Agency to dinner, of those happy

luxurious souls who owned rickshaws, we tried to cheer ourselves with the reflection that probably ours was a more English Christmas than it would have been if it had been 'seasonable.' I do not think that I had better say much about the festivities; but it is a peaceful recollection that our turkey was peculiarly tender, that the Christmas pudding flamed halfway round the table, and that the crackers were not spoiled by the damp! His Honour the Judge played Pan-pipes with a red liberty cap on the back of his head, and the wife of the First Minister looked perfectly charming as a Turkish lady of fashion at a dance next day. The Sultan was courtly and suave; and the rich robes of the Arabs, together with the fancy dress of the company, as one looked at them from the balcony which projects into the dark garden, made a vivid picture with which to close the *festa*.

What a panorama is life! But—it is not harsh—perhaps some black mother in a half-soaked hut among the trees of the island, as she felt baby lips at her breast, stood closest to the Heart of the King as He pondered His recollections.

XXVI

THE COMING KINGDOM

That first impressions have a value all their own is a commonplace of travel, the danger being a tendency to forget that the new-comer must be content with *impressions*. It has, indeed, become a classical warning that whereas intuitive judgments are frequently right, the reasons by which we try to support them are usually wrong, and that hence suggestions for reforms based upon our early judgments ought to be reserved until some few years have passed over us. But the first impression, as an impression, is always valuable, and perhaps the more so if it be a kind of secondary 'first impression.' A visitor whose stay in a mission is limited to a few weeks often forms an entirely erroneous conception of the work that is being done, unless he is in a position to acquire more authoritative information than is possible for most men; while most new-comers at the end of a few months would give anything but a

rosy account of missionary activity. And this is natural. The chance visitor is impressed by the mere sight of black men in church, and native ministers in the sanctuary. The newcomer, on the contrary, has to pass through a stage of helplessness, while he, whose service was active at home, must stand by and do nothing but learn a wearisome language, and contrast foreign and home methods. He has to learn, too, that missionaries are no better than other people, and that, on the whole, miracles are not more common abroad than they are at home. Somehow this awakening to reality, foolish as it is not to be prepared for it, is a bitter time to the young missionary. We ought, surely, to prepare him more carefully for it.

But this is not the real 'first impression.' This is merely the experience which belongs to the adaptation of a man's personality to his new environment. It is the finding of the new shoes, which pinch because of the very things which made them so beautiful when first they were put on! The real 'first impression,' which this chapter is an attempt to express, is perhaps only found when, a little more attune to his surroundings, while as yet not so far removed from the old as to forget the contrast,

the new-comer is able to weigh, as others cannot, the solidity of the past and the hope of the future. Men who have been many years in the field bend a little beneath the care of the churches, and see the stars less readily. It must be so. They told themselves ten years ago that it was natural for these converts to fail, considering that they have inherited the burden of heathen centuries, and have been dragged to civilisation in slave-chains; but ten years seems long except to Him who sitteth above the water-floods, and older missionaries may be forgiven if they lapse sometimes into the ways of arm-chair critics. Even they forget sometimes that the Church is very nearly two thousand years old; that it took three centuries to conquer even on the shores of the Mediterranean; and that the Canons of the English Church, many years after Augustine, reveal amazing blemishes. And it is just because the other side sometimes needs emphasising that these words are written; because, to the writer, one kindling glowing fact seems more true than ever it did in England; because that 'the Lord God omnipotent reigneth' is here not only a dim hope grasped by faith, but a word of conquest blazoned in the heavens.

This is a Mohammedan city, and as you walk through its streets you cannot fail to realise it. There are mosques at every turn, and small green tickets, recently affixed by the Government to all mosque property, remind you that religion is richly endowed. Then, again, the very Government is outwardly Mohammedan, and such is the elasticity of the British political conscience that it can on Sunday, as Christian, declare its faith in the Life and Passion of our Lord, and on Monday, as Mohammedan, set up schools with a curriculum which embraces the teaching of the Koran, whose plain words give the Apostles' Creed the lie. But despite all this and very much more, despite all that we are told (and all that is *true*) about forward movements in Islam, nothing is more absolutely sure than the break-up of Mohammedanism as a religion. It is already in its death throes. It has entered on a conflict not only with organised Christianity, but with that civilisation which has been born of Christianity, and which is proving its origin in the face of the critics by doing the works of Christianity at every turn. Of the issue of that conflict there is no doubt. Like every other conflict, it will have unexpected developments, and

like every other conflict, there will be loss and blood and tears; but already the Crescent wavers before the Cross. Some who see the wavering do not see the Cross; but we see, and it is just this victory of faithful seeing which has ever overcome the world.

Let us look at it. It is Ramadhan here, in a Mohammedan city, and however poor a Moslem's faith may be, if he is a Moslem at all, he keeps Ramadhan. No wonder, then, that the old religious leaders of the town are troubled when one high *Mohammedan* authority declares that only 4 per cent. of the city has kept the Fast this year, and the highest authority of them all sets the figure at 2 per cent.! It is the young men who will not keep it. If one stands on the bridge that leads from the city to the country, one can see each morning young Arabs by the hundred going out into the woods for the day to escape observation. They will come back in time to join in the ceremonies of the evening ritual, because as yet they are not prepared to break so entirely with the past; but the spirit of Islam is no longer in them. And why? The answer is absolutely simple. It is just that the fever of the West is in their veins, and that they know its doom is on the old order of things.

BOYS ON THE QUAY

Very many are, of course, intoxicated with the liberty and licence of the West. Others are well aware that learning and progress is of the West, and, in reality, of the West alone. Others still are feeling that truth is of the West, and in their heart of hearts they know that the crudities of popular Mohammedanism, as well as the manifest absurdities of the official faith, cannot be held by instructed men.[1] It is the coming of learning that has done it. The young Arab of to-day not only knows the English tongue, but also reads English papers, and thinks in English terms. One such, during a recent lecture, showed entire familiarity with the decisions of the Thompson-Bannister case, and inquired of the precise obligation to Protestantism, as opposed to Catholicity, which King George inherits by reason of the Act of Settlement! And to such men, that Mohammed split the moon, and underwent an angelical surgical operation for the removal of original sin, is precisely the rubbish that it is to us. The only trouble is that so many Moslems, here at least, know so little about their own faith; but even that they are learning from Western sources. And

[1] Since writing the above, a young modern Arab, of his own initiative, used almost precisely these words to me.

they will learn. The son of a prominent Arab has recently returned from an education on Western lines in Beyrout; he declines to attend his father's mosque. An old relation of high rank, fearful at this, vows that his grandchildren shall not learn English nor English ways—but how will he stop them? It is all very well to speak of Eastern culture and science, but practically it is as nothing against the learning of the West. The West has power, and practical things, and money. Rightly or wrongly, it is El Dorado to the young Eastern, and you cannot keep him from those riches. Personally, I believe that he is right. Argue as you will, the East has stored its treasures these many centuries, and they are of ancient things. It is the West that has been alive. The West has parcelled the world and divided its riches, and the East will only win them back with Western tools. Japan, China, and, in a great measure, India, know it well, for the former have proved it true, and the dead hand of Mohammed cannot any longer hold back the Moslem world.

The great unappreciated factor in the awakening of the East is the effect of the dominance of Western influence here in the heart of the East itself. This city, for example, is itself, to

the young Arab, largely European to-day. His learning takes him into Government service, into commercial undertakings, or into the courts; and in these days he must earn his living or starve, and in these ways he must do it. But what then? At the head of every department stands the European, with Western standards and methods. To get on he must know English. English judges are supreme in the courts, and already we see the beginnings of the modification of Moslem law. The Moslem marriage laws, for example, have religious sanction, are unalterably fixed by the lusts of a prophet thirteen hundred years dead, and regard women solely as the slaves of men's lust. How can an English judge, however much he may regard himself as fettered by his technical position as a member of a Mohammedan administration, serve laws such as these? He cannot, and he does not. He modifies them, and his modifications are an object-lesson to the young officials. With opening eyes they see still more. They see what is the relationship of the decent Englishman to his wife. They watch the Western manners at some Agency function. They attend Western plays performed by amateurs among the European colony. Their rich men buy motor-

cars, drink wines, and copy our manners. The Sultan motors abroad among his subjects with his one wife and their little son as an English gentleman might do. The telephone, a typewriter, and pictures are in his study, and he is no feckless youth, but a middle-aged man, Westernised so far (for it comes to this) that he is wise enough to retain his rich and courtly Arab dress. The crowds in the palace square have the daily telegrams read out to them. The storming of Tripoli, the resignation of the Turkish Cabinet, or the doings at Delhi, leave them breathless with astonishment. The picture-shops, with gaudy cartoons of the war, are thronged every day. If Constantinople falls, or if Turkey becomes a republic, our world will rock yet more—none can say how much. And meanwhile our young men petition for compulsory education, read the *Weekly Times*, form themselves into clubs, and keep Ramadhan in the depths of the woods!

It is when one turns to the Christian Church, even here, that the amazing reverse of the picture appears. The element which suggests itself is *stability*, and it is suggested in such an amazing number of ways. Look at the language. It is the Mission that has considered it scientifically, and prepared the grammars

and 'readers,' so that now in this Swahili-speaking country the best Swahili is the Swahili of the Prayer-Book and the Bible. There is only one marriage law, plain and rigid, in the country, and that is the Christian. There are only two imposing religious buildings, and they are the Christian cathedrals. There is only one effort being made to train religious teachers along lines fearlessly open to modern knowledge, and that is the Christian. There is only one literature flooding even Hindi clubs, and that is the English and Christian—for even where it is not orthodoxly Christian, it is Christian in moral and ethical tone. The Christian Church itself, too, is like a rock amid these floods. Day by day the Church's Liturgy is said in Christian sanctuaries as if Mohammed had never been born. It is said by an instructed native ministry, which one feels instinctively has come to stay. And even more manifestations of Christ's religion, so impotent and foolish to the world, so revolutionary and dynamic to the historian, and so sublime and real to the Christian, are here at work. Near this big city, in a Christian village, at this very hour, a little band of women are pledged to a life of prayer. They are no longer 'of England,' for their gaze, for living and for dying, is

towards Africa. They are 'of the Sacred Passion,' linked to that incredible foolishness of Calvary which has turned the world upside down. And these will do it; it is the lesson of history, of philosophy, of faith. What has Mohammed to set against that bewildering piety of surrender, that transcendental obstinacy of faith?

Or, again, the Apostolate is here. If I were an agnostic I should fear bishops! In England it is sometimes our custom to make light of them, but after all is said and done, did ever army achieve conquests like those of the threefold ministry of the Catholic Church? To the Catholic mind, the bishop is the centre of obedience and unity; linked about him go all those forces which the alchemy of Christianity has wrested somehow from the world; and this apart from his claim to be, in the Ignatian phrase, 'as Jesus Christ.' It is surely a remarkable thing that the Episcopate has clung to lands with a pertinacity indifferent to reformations, reactions, or suppressions. And here it is in East Africa. Behind it is the driving force of a priesthood which has no need to be ashamed. It was planned for conquest.

It may be urged against all this that Christianity is itself divided; and that even here,

among some few score white rulers professing the Christian name, you have enemies and divisions. Nor may it be denied. As we count up the white congregation, Sunday by Sunday, we sometimes fear. We are not less than in other places; indeed, we show an excellent average; but what of this? Is not historic Christianity in a bad way everywhere?

Sir H. Johnston has pointed out recently in *The East and the West* that it is good for the clergy to see service abroad, as it enlarges their outlook. It seems to me that he is entirely right. For it is here, on the fringe of things, that the amazing weakness of the opposition to orthodox Christianity seems so plain. One has only got to read the books which influence anti-Christian thought among average Englishmen to see it. One such passed into my hands the other day, which only showed with unmistakable clearness that its author was opposing a Christianity that was a chimera of his own imagination, and basing his opposition upon incredible ignorance.[1] He can actually write that Hinduism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Buddhism have been 'untouched' by Christ as they have been 'untouched' by one

[1] *The Hearts of Men*, by H. Fielding.

another! Christ has made no more impression on China than Buddha on Europe! In a word, the world's religions are alike, stagnant and passing. And this with India's Christianity advancing for the last thirty years at such a speed that the Empire will be Christian in a hundred and sixty years; with Catholic Christianity alone strong enough to produce in China an army of native clergy big enough to outnumber either the C.M.S. or the S.P.G. clergy throughout the world[1]; and with Japan recognising Christianity as one of the religions of the Empire. The very fact that men who dissent from orthodox Christianity *think* their case supported by such works as these assures our victory. Men are mostly non-religious to-day, for exactly the reason St. John alleged centuries ago—they love the world. They are dazzled by its wonder, its freedom, and its ever-increasing pleasures in this age. They give up the faith because of its restraints, and then they bolster up their disobedience by incredible ignorance. Hardly a man who declines to believe the Catholic Faith could tell you what that Catholic Faith is which he declines to believe. Those of us who listen to his

[1] *Annual Review of the Foreign Missions of the Church,* 1911, p. 44.

talk in the smoking-rooms of ocean-going liners, or in the lounges of clubs, gather that the chief articles of Catholic Faith are that God made the world in one hundred and forty-four literal hours, that Eve was deceived by a creeping serpent, that Balaam's ass talked, that Jonah was swallowed by a whale, that the greater part of the world is going to hell, and that heaven is a place of white robes and harps. That is, at least, the religion at which they jeer, and whose it is I do not know. Of the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Life Everlasting there is no talk. They are simply ignorant of orthodoxy.

Over against these trivialities and nightmares stands the Apostles' Creed. Where all our quondam friends disagree and propose weird faiths, the Catholic religion remains a reasonable whole. In any hundred men picked at random—the hundred men that congregate in these outposts of the world—no one ever has a complete religious philosophy, making any attempt to agree with logical science or history, to offer except the Catholic. There may be a thousand philosophies in the study, but there is only one among the negations in the street. 'In dealing with religion,' says Harnack, 'is it not after all with the Christian religion alone

that we have to do ? Other religions no longer stir the depths of our hearts.' And if we want a further proof it lies in this, that there is no other philosophy of God that has Missions to the heathen save the Christian. That faith alone seeks to save.

I began by saying that this was but an impression, and I wish to leave it at that. Perhaps I have been over-daring to speak of such things as I have; certainly I have neither authority nor wit to say much more. But there surges through me, as I walk down our Eastern streets that have not yet quite lost their novelty, an assurance that I never thought to have before. We seem to be living here in a chaotic confusion of religions, policies, and societies. No man knows what to-morrow will bring —religiously, politically, or socially—among all these crowds in our streets. There is a fever abroad, and a fear. But it seems to me that, among all the mists and quicksands, there is a Rock, higher than I, which is as steadfast as ever, as unique as ever, and as pronounced as ever. There are a thousand elements of unrest abroad, there is only one of rest; there are a thousand elements of change, there is only one of stability. I look on the Moslem Faith growing vaguely fearful, and I would

cry with Alfred in Mr. G. K. Chesterton's ballad :

> 'That though all lances split on you,
> All swords be heaved in vain,
> We have more lust again to lose
> Than you to win again!'

I look on these wavering Christians, and yet I am more sure than ever that there is only one source to which any soul in this city will turn when it comes to need God. And, above all, I look on this kaleidoscopic world, and I am utterly convinced that of all kingdoms there is but one that has no end.

All this is, of course, beyond argument, and I feel content that it should be so. So is the First Epistle of St. John. So was the confidence of Alban and George, the wanton dying of the child martyrs, the ecstasy of Julian and Theresa, and the extravagance of Francis and Ignatius. It is this faith which bears us, and teaches us at last to rest from our petty efforts to support it. And it is this faith which lights a vision of which there is only one thing to say :

> 'Mine eyes have seen—my God I glorify!
> Mine eyes have seen—Trust me! I would not lie.
> Nay, trust me not, my tidings prove and try!
> An you would see, come the same way as I—
> Way of the white fields where the sheaves we tie—
> Come!'

XXVII

BEYOND THE DISTANT HILLS

We are out in the fairway, and the city is looking more beautiful than it has any right to look. The foreign consulates along the front are gay with flags, and palms star the whiteness of it all from where the scarlet of the Sultan waves across to the red, white, and blue above the Agency roof. A swarm of shore boats, filled with that picturesque crowd which makes up in chatter what it lacks in solid effort, lies alongside; but they will fall away soon. The big boat beneath us will gather way; the city and its gardens will be low on the horizon in an hour or so; and the world's wheels will go on turning here as if I had never tried to hurry them.

But it is not of the city I would write. Far out across the matchless blue of this tropical strait there shines clear to-day the outline of those hills which I had dreamed of many times before I saw them, and often since. They lie out beyond the low islands of the reef—those

emeralds set in white foam; beyond the dazzling sheen of the coral sand-banks; beyond the white flecks of the dhow's sails that beat where I may not go. They are misty and low, but I would rather look towards them for the last time than island-wards.

I remember that I saw them first years ago, in a London suburb, a-sprawl one winter before the fire with a book of Livingstone's travels. Then I have seen them from the depths of a monstrous arm-chair in a little attic room off an ancient court, where the cold moon lies frostily over the stained oriel and the little turret of the old hall. I have seen them on many a steamy fragrant summer day, lying full-length under the sweeping willows of the Upper River, while the slow current dragged the water-weeds here and there and the scent of rich woods filled the air. And even more, perhaps, I have looked out towards them from mountain-tops in Scotland, high on Ben Venue with the Tay babbling beneath, or stretched on the heather slopes of Goatfell in one of the best of the western isles. Here I have seen them nearer these many months, and, sitting at the gate, have heard travellers' tales as they passed through.

It is not less a land of mystery because now the railway runs beyond; indeed, it is more so. That it should be possible to skip thunderingly through the great forests, past the great herds of game on the wide plains, right up to the snow head of Kilimanjaro who braves God against His sky! It does not really matter that (as an old traveller from the so-distant land told me) Ilala and its environment is now under strict control, so that you may not even die without registration. Still, for me, the heart of Livingstone is there, and the spirit of many more; and I know that there are a hundred thousand villages there where the soul of Africa is beating as though the white man had never set out to conquer the world.

But that soul of Africa is the enigma. Many physicians have tried to doctor it. Beyond the hills the spires of cathedrals star the land; from Blantyre and its thriving schools; past Likoma and a Christian island, where in the memory of living men witches were burned and their children with them; to Tanganyika and the great church of the White Fathers, centre of I do not know how many lesser stations. Last and greatest, maybe, this Physician, but Africa has spent her money on many more.

AN AFRICAN STREAM

Beyond those hills there are towns and villages as full of mud mosques as the city behind me of stone ones; there are trails blazed with the surgeon-knife of the Prophet that he used so wantonly; and there are fierce hearts and eager hands. But is that all? Picture to yourself the many ruins that those hills hide, the unknown cities and temples buried in a tangle of forest, lost in the maze of her ways. They did not come without their gods, those old builders, if come they did, for maybe here the great womb of creative evolution travailed in the dawn of the world. But beyond, beyond. . . . Not so very far away the Nile whispers first among his rushes, and thunders later past the silent columns and storied temples of the desert sands. And between us and the Nile the teeming tropical world has hidden a thousand secrets more, of which one can but dream.

And so I pass the barrier in thought to the little villages, the low huts, the green patches, the deep cool wells, the high waving trees of the land of men and women whose backs have ever been bowed down. Are they old, or are they young? Have they wrested that trick of the bones, that mutter of the wizard, that

hideous fetish of the pitiable human fragments and the black mud, that dance at night before the spirits of grove or stone, all these things, from the wrack of a hundred immemorial faiths or from the imagination of the child-man of the world? That is what one wonders, and it makes an enormous difference as one looks at the hills.

The Dean of St. Paul's in his four lectures on *The Church and the Age*, which reached us after the press had dubbed their author by a lugubrious sobriquet, takes one line. He is very sure that the Church is not far down the ages with her journey just begun, but that the incredible age of the inorganic world, our speculations as to the vista of years down which the human race has come since the Ipswich man left his bones in East Anglian mud, and the comparative shortness of the historic era, all point to many ages yet to be. Religiously, we are the Fathers of the future Church—Chrysostom, Tertullian, and Clement merely the babes. Practically, it is better to settle down quietly and do the next thing without speculation, for we are but dust in the pathway of the Breath of Life, and as likely as dust to understand the ways of that passing.

But is it so? If a thousand years are to the

Lord as one day, so is a day as a thousand years. Our modern deans may well be wise, but however idly one speculates upon the wisdom of the past, one hesitates to call them fathers. And more pertinently, this Africa beyond the hills, is not she old after all? Her sons are more like old old men, sick with the childishness of old age, than children of a dawn. Her sins are more like the last game of the devil than the first he played. Her ingrained habits of sloth and dishonesty, of quick reversion to the type, of inability to stand upright in the world's press, these are not the characteristics of an evolutionary birth-stage. One can see Africa nearer home than those hills wherever old men, sodden with vice, tempt little children in the slums, and old women laugh at them for it.

No; it does not seem to me that the scheme of earthly things is still young; but do those hills, then, hide despairs? I think not so. The flame of hope that flickers anew in every soul as it is born has been brightened in many there for the altar of the temple of God. Though a fan winnow the floor, there is grain for the garner. And even for the rest I have no ultimate despair. If He must at last scatter any of the chaff, I know enough of Him to be sure

that even that will be best, and if hypocrisy and cant do most to make for chaff, there is more in other floors than here. But God does not waste in any case. Cannot even we, in our factories, recreate, from dust and bone and rag, fair white paper for another story, fairer, it may be, than the first ? And God is a greater alchemist than we. When the Deliverer trails His robe over the world in His coming, we shall see. Perhaps, as once before, there are who will not recognise Him when He comes ; I do not know. But there are also eyes which will open then to the light, and palsied feet which will leap up then and walk; and it is because I would fain see the light of that day that I gaze out last of all upon the hills. All these months it has only once been ordered that I should go beyond, and now it is not likely that I shall ever do so again. But no one can bar my thoughts. I go back to dream on still, and if that be all, still this last dream is the best, for despite the disappointments and the sorrows the gold of the true dawn is glittering there, and I know that across the hill-tops comes the King.

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